MAIDANA EARNS HIS 'MONEY'

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

RING

MAYWEATHER GOES TO 46-0 BUT LOOKS HUMAN
P.72

RACISM IN BOXING
DONALD STERLING-LIKE SLURS ARE OVERLOOKED
P.62

PERFECT EXECUTION:
BERNARD HOPKINS' HOW-TO SERIES IS BACK
P.27

U.S. HEAVYWEIGHTS
THERE IS REASON FOR HOPE
P.48

RISKY BUSINESS

GLOVE-GATE
STANDARDIZED GLOVES ARE THE SOLUTION
P.80

CANELO ALVAREZ

GAMBLES HIS FUTURE AGAINST
ERISLANDY LARA P.40

BEST I FACED:
RIDDICK BOWE
P.20

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72

Floyd Mayweather Jr. revels in a hard-earned victory over Marcos Maidana on May 3.

FEATURES

40 DO OR DIE
CANELO ALVAREZ CAN'T AFFORD TO SLIP UP AGAINST ERISLANDY LARA
By Bart Barry

46 HEAD-TO-HEAD ANALYSIS
THE RING BREAKS DOWN ALVAREZ-LARA IN 20 KEY CATEGORIES
By Doug Fischer

48 HEAVYWEIGHT HOPE
THE RISE OF AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHTS MIGHT BE ON THE HORIZON
By Bernard Fernandez

53 BIG MEN: LOOKING BACK
THE RING RANKS THE 10 BEST U.S. HEAVYWEIGHTS BY DECADE
By Martin Mulcahey

56 GOLDEN BOY UPHEAVAL
IS THE OSCAR DE LA HOYA-RICHARD SCHAEFER RIFT IRRECONCILABLE?
By Ron Borges

59 BOOK REVIEWS
'BOUTS OF MANIA' RECOUNTS ALI-FRAZIER-FOREMAN SERIES
By Thomas Hauser

62 RACISM IN BOXING
THE SPORT TAKES ITS DON STERLING-LIKE MOMENTS IN STRIDE
By Tim Smith

68 JIMMY ELLIS: 1940-2014
THE LATE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP WILL ALWAYS BE LINKED TO ALI
By Thomas Hauser

72 SURPRISE, SURPRISE
MARCOS MAIDANA GIVES FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. A SCARE
By Ron Borges

80 TIME FOR CHANGE
GLOVES SHOULD BE STANDARDIZED AFTER MAY 3 CONTROVERSY
By Norm Frauenheim

COVER PHOTO / COURTESY OF SHOWTIME

DEPARTMENTS

6 RINGSIDE

7 OPENING SHOTS

12 COME OUT WRITING

15 ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES
Jabs and Straight Writes by Thomas Hauser

20 BEST I FACED: RIDDICK BOWE
By Anson Wainwright

22 READY TO GRUMBLE
By David Greisman

25 OUTSIDE THE ROPES
By Brian Harty

27 PERFECT EXECUTION
By Bernard Hopkins

32 RING RATINGS PACKAGE

86 LETTERS FROM EUROPE
By Gareth A Davies

90 DOUGIE'S MAILBAG
By Doug Fischer

92 NEW FACES: JULIAN RODRIGUEZ
By Keith Idec

94 SWEET SCIENCE
By Scott LaFee

96 WOMEN'S BOXING
By Thomas Gerbasi

98 AMATEUR BOXING
By Joe Santoliquito

100 RINGSIDE REPORTS
By Norm Frauenheim

106 WORLDWIDE RESULTS

108 COMING UP

112 FROM THE ARCHIVE

114 AT THE FIGHTS

AT RINGTV.COM

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86

Kell Brook has reason to smile beyond the affections of his girlfriend. The welterweight contender has big opportunities on the horizon.

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THINK BEFORE YOU DOPE

The photo of Billy Collins on Page 85 of this issue, his grotesquely bruised eyes swollen shut, is a particularly dark example of man abusing his fellow man.

Luis Resto, the fighter who inflicted the wounds on Collins, and trainer Panama Lewis spent time in prison after it was discovered that Lewis had removed padding from Resto's gloves before the 1983 fight. In effect, Collins was bludgeoned with blunt instruments.

As a result, he lost clear vision, had to retire and was killed when he crashed his car into a culvert. Many believe he committed suicide.

A horrible lesson learned? Not necessarily. There are more Restos and Lewises in boxing.

Oh, it generally isn't as overt as the criminal actions leading to Collins' death, although Antonio Margarito was caught with an illegal insert in his gloves before a fight against Shane Mosley in 2009 and was suspended.

More often, the cheating is subtle. It is done by inserting foreign substances into the body to make a fighter stronger or faster or more resilient. The common term for them is performance-enhancing drugs.

A lot of people have suggested publicly that Juan Manuel Marquez used PEDs before his fight against Mike Alvarado in May because of his bulging muscles at 40 and acne on his chest. However, the allegations are baseless without concrete proof and are an injustice to Marquez, who to my knowledge has never failed a drug test. Innocent until proven guilty.

This I know because of occasional positive tests, though: There ARE boxers out there who take PEDs before their fights. And while one could argue that isn't as egregious as removing padding from gloves, it is disturbing.

I've always been told that boxers have profound respect for other boxers, even those against whom they go to war. Only they know the sacrifices it takes before and during a fight to leave the ring intact, which supposedly creates a bond.

I'm not so sure. Some boxers – those who cheat – are willing to put their brethren at undue risk by trying to gain an artificial advantage in pursuit of glory or a big payday. This isn't baseball or basketball, games in which the lives of its participants generally aren't at risk.

Boxing is no game. It's a sport in which life-changing injury or death lurks around every corner of the ring. Boxers know the dangers. At the same time, they have a right to assume that the playing field will be level when they step through the ropes, that their opponent won't have an unfair advantage.

I think of Oscar De La Hoya's fights against Fernando Vargas in 2002 and Shane Mosley in 2003. Vargas tested positive for steroids after the fight while Mosley later admitted to having taken EPO beforehand.

What if De La Hoya had been killed in one of those fights? Vargas or Mosley would be deemed a criminal, arguably a murderer. And even if the culprit somehow avoided justice, how could he have lived with himself?

To be clear: Those who cheat in any way are playing with another man's life. I would hope that any boxer considering the use of PEDs would keep that in mind.

The RING

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No one was more excited about Bermane Stiverne's sixth-round knockout of Chris Arreola on May 10 than the man himself. Stiverne won the vacant WBC heavyweight title.

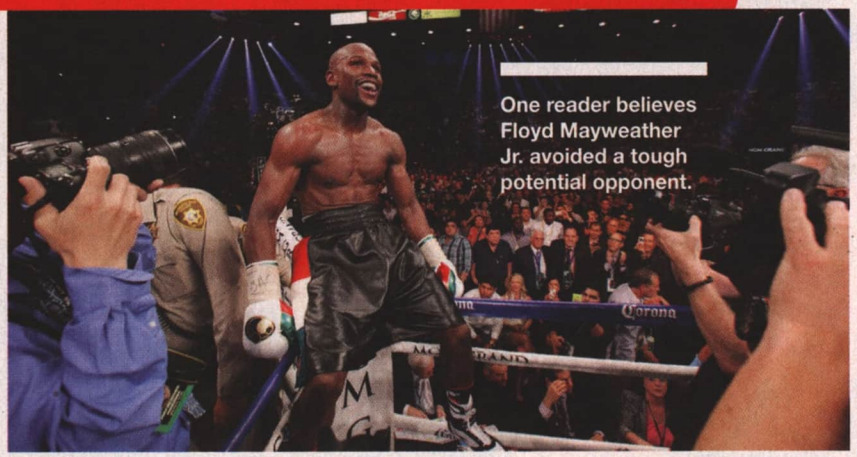
Floyd Mayweather Jr. and pal Justin Bieber (right) celebrate with a selfie after "Money" withstood a stiff challenge from Marcos Maidana to remain unbeaten on May 3 in Las Vegas.

ED MULHOLLAND/MAYWEATHER BOXING VIA GETTY IMAGES

Amir Khan (right) made a strong statement at Luis Collazo's expense on the Mayweather-Maidana undercard, winning a one-sided decision that pumped life into his career.

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

COME OUT WRITING



One reader believes Floyd Mayweather Jr. avoided a tough potential opponent.

DUCK DYNASTY?

The article Ron Borges wrote in the June 2014 issue entitled "Ducking Opponents? No Way" on Floyd Mayweather Jr. was intriguing. I am a Mayweather fan and have followed his career since 1997. I feel that he did avoid a fighter in his prime, Paul Williams. He could have fought Williams when Williams was the 33-0 WBO welterweight champion in 2007 after defeating Antonio Margarito, who other boxers were avoiding at the time. Instead, Mayweather chose the easier fight with junior welterweight champ Ricky Hatton, who had to come up to welterweight. Hatton didn't have any advantages over Mayweather. After that fight, Mayweather retired. I believe he chose to retire to avoid Williams, who had height, reach and power advantages over Mayweather and possibly could have upset him. I personally believe Mayweather would have won that fight but it would've been far from easy (think Leonard-Hearns I). I think Mayweather had some doubts. Why risk his perfect record when he could come out of retirement when Williams had moved up to the middleweight division? That's what he did. So was Williams ducked? I think so.

Richard Santiago
Tatamy, Pa.

UNBEATABLE

Pure and simple, the only fighter who could beat Floyd Mayweather Jr. is dead: Sugar Ray Robinson.

Louis Patrizio
Merrick, N.Y.

ONE VOTE FOR MAIDANA

I had Marcos Maidana winning against Floyd Mayweater by a 7-5 margin because Mayweather was forced to take far more backward steps than Maidana. True, taking backward steps in the ring can be an integral part of a counterpuncher's strategy (i.e. Juan Manuel Marquez). Indeed, Mayweather is better than anyone else at this approach. However, in judging a fight, one must also discern between backward steps taken for reasons of strategy and resourcefulness, and those taken in retreat because the "counterpuncher" (in this case, Mayweather) was being forced backward by the sledgehammer blows of his opponent. Those "clean shots" thrown by Mayweather in the latter portion of the fight should not detract from who was forcing the other guy to retreat. Still a great fight, and it was certainly not an egregious decision.

Jake VanderKooy, Ph. D
York University (Glendon campus)
Toronto, Ontario

END THE COLD WAR

Bernard Hopkins recently said that he is against ending the Cold War between Top Rank and Golden Boy. He says the ONLY fight the fans are missing out on because of this Cold War is Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao. Well, Mr. Hopkins, how about Marcos Maidana vs. Ruslan Provodnikov, Brandon Rios vs. Lucas Matthysse, Tim Bradley vs. Danny Garcia or Nonito Donaire vs Abner Mares? Any of these matchups have "Fight of the Year" potential. It's bad enough that we're getting screwed out of what would be the biggest fight in boxing history, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. End this stupid war for the good of the sport. If there were any more politics involved in this mess, we would be watching boxing on CNN instead of ESPN.

Victor Rivero
Pacifica, Calif.

ST. PAUL PRODUCT

I wish to correct a mistake that was made in the article about the 2014 inductees in the International Boxing Hall of Fame (April-July issues). It stated that former middleweight champion Mike O'Dowd, a new inductee, was a product of Minneapolis. That is insulting to the city of St. Paul. O'Dowd was born in St. Paul, lived his entire life in St. Paul, boxed out of the city and defended his world title there several times. O'Dowd also died there. After retiring, O'Dowd owned a large nightclub called "The Harp" on busy Robert Street in downtown St. Paul for years. He also owned another club in later years on Cathedral Hill in St. Paul. O'Dowd actually lived in the same neighborhood in St. Paul as the famous Gibbons brothers (Mike and Tommy) at the same time.

George D. Blair
St. Paul, Minn

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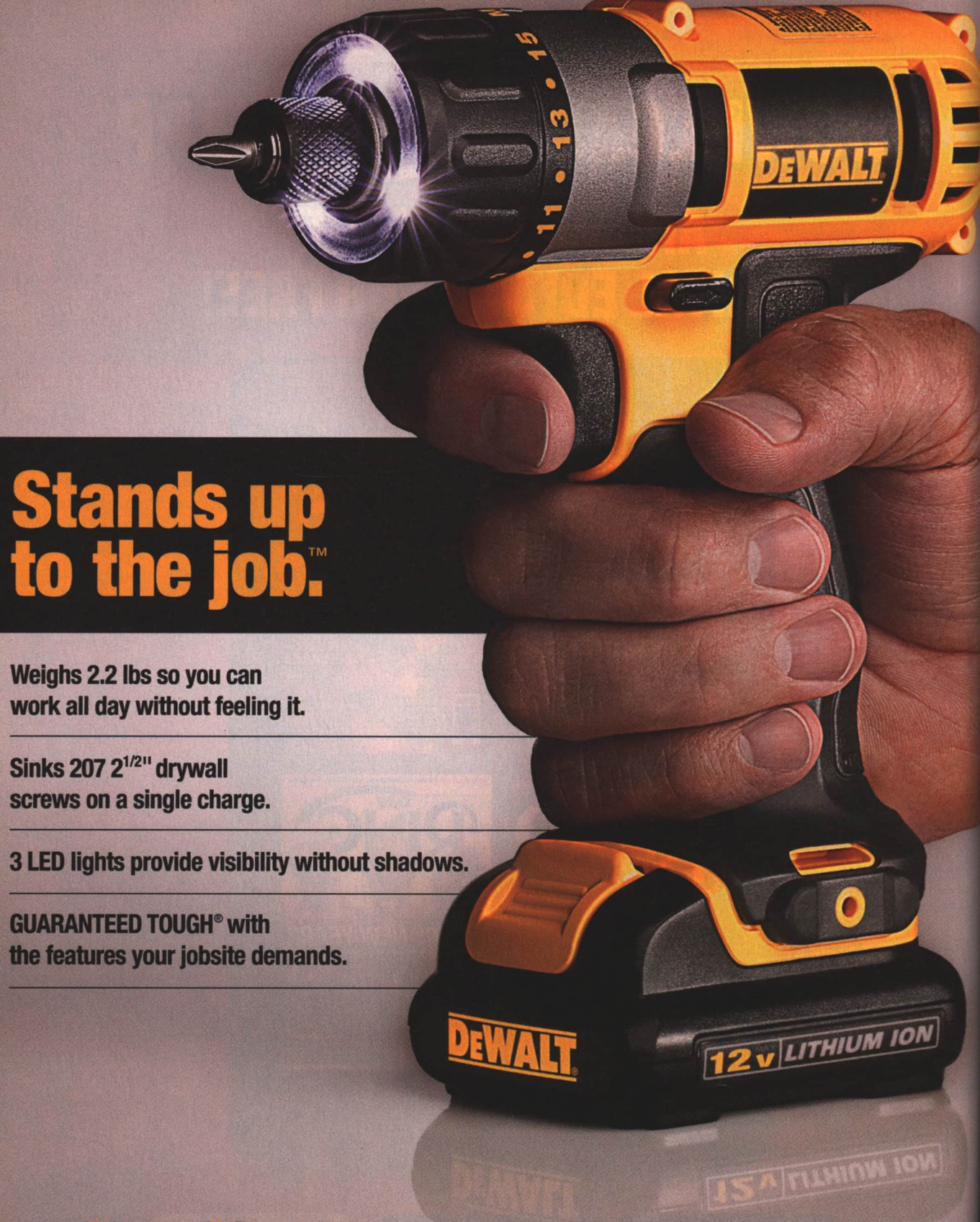

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JABS & STRAIGHT **WRITES**
BY THOMAS HAUSER

FLIGHT TO A FIGHT

SEAN MONAGHAN PROVIDES A GLIMPSE INTO A BOXER'S MINDSET ON HIS WAY TO A BOUT IN LAS VEGAS

Sean Monaghan appeared to be just another passenger en route to Las Vegas.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

What's it like for a fighter en route to a fight?

Sean Monaghan sat in seat 28D on Delta Airlines flight 406 preparing to fly from New York to Las Vegas. The plane was filled to capacity with passengers traveling to Sin City to gamble. Monaghan was about to take a bigger gamble than any of them. In four days, he would enter a boxing ring at the MGM Grand Garden Arena to do battle in the opening bout on the Manny Pacquiao-Tim Bradley II undercard.

Unlike his fellow passengers, Monaghan, a light heavyweight, would be punched in the face multiple times before the week was done. If someone on flight 406 returned to New York missing a tooth or with stitches above an eye, it was likely to be him. But he was also more likely than his fellow passengers to come home a winner.

Monaghan isn't a celebrity fighter. Heads didn't turn when he boarded the plane. He looked like just another guy

going to Las Vegas. But if there were a disruptive passenger, Monaghan is the guy the flight crew would be happy to have onboard.

The plane left the gate on schedule. Then the pilot came on the loudspeaker system.

"Right now we're number 10 for takeoff. Things are moving slowly this morning because of the fog," he announced.

There was a collective groan from the passengers.

"I don't mind it," Monaghan said. "When I fought in Vegas last year, my wife and Sammy (their 2-year-old son) came with me. Now we have a daughter, Malia, who's 5 weeks old. She's too young to travel. As great as it is to have children, this is quite time for me."

After a delay of 20 minutes, the plane took off.

"Vegas is OK for a few days," Monaghan said. "I'll be pretty much holed up in my room trying to make weight. Right now, making weight is more on my mind than the fight. I woke up this morning at 182 and have to make 175 by Friday. It won't be a problem, but I'm looking forward to being able to eat like a human being again."

The WBC Continental Americas championship belt was lodged in the bin overhead.

"I didn't check it because I was afraid I'd never see it again," Monaghan said. "I've had it for about a year and a half now. That would be a hell of a way to lose it."

Monaghan's opponent in Las Vegas on Saturday night would be Joe McCreedy.

"I'm 20 and 0. His record is something like 15 and 6," said Monaghan, who is 32. "It's no big deal if he loses to a guy who's 20 and 0. But if I lose to a guy who's 15 and 6, my career nosedives. There's pressure on me because of that. But at least I'll be able to sleep through the night this week. My wife has the hard job now." ★

Note: Monaghan broke McCreedy down with body shots. Referee Jay Nady stopped the bout after the third knockdown, at 2:25 of Round 5.

Duane Ford was one of the judges who shocked Pacquiao.

'I HAVE NO REGRETS'

On Friday, April 11, a 76-year-old man with a pleasant face sat at a round table in the media center at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Duane Ford retired as an active boxing judge last year and is now president of the North American Boxing Federation. In a matter of hours, Manny Pacquiao and Tim Bradley would weigh in for the rematch of their 2012 encounter.

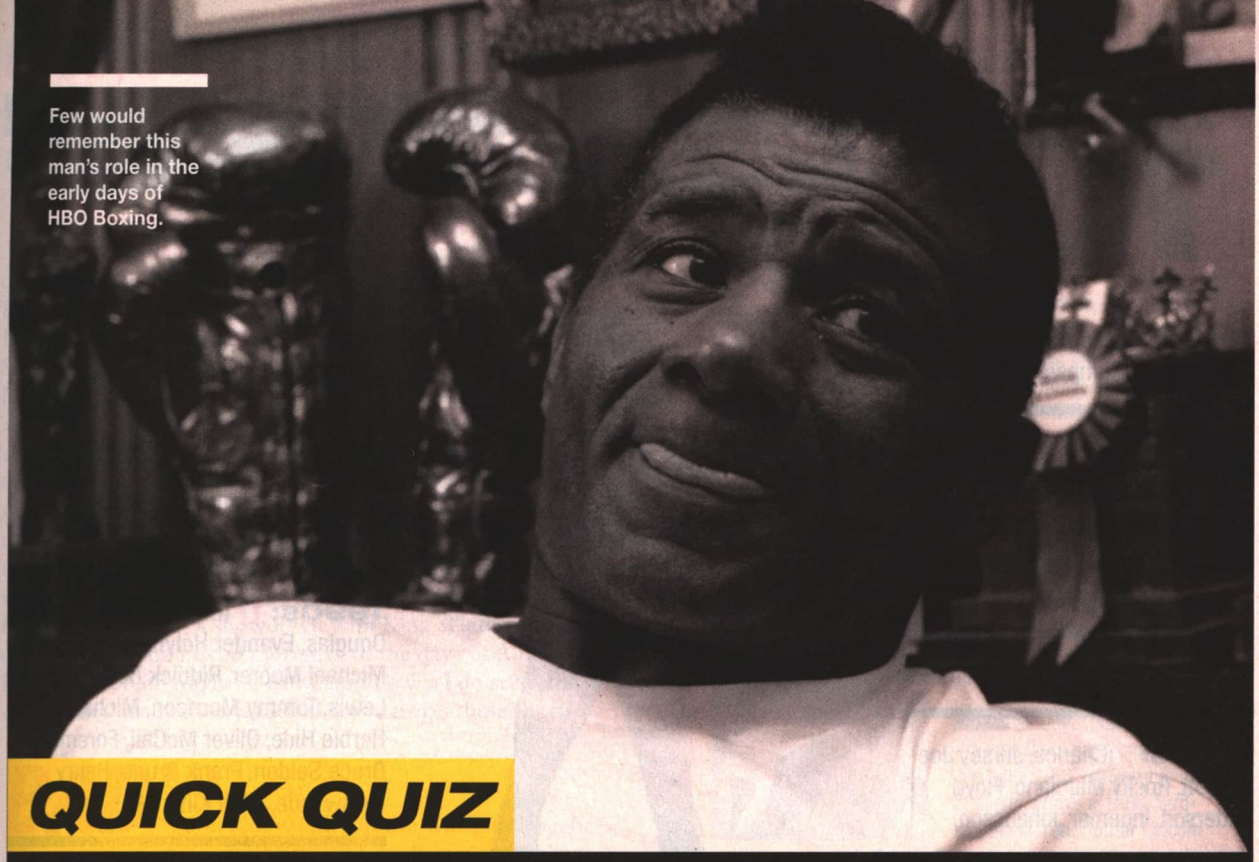
Oscar Valdez would be fighting Adrian Perez for the NABF super featherweight title on the undercard. Hence Ford's presence.

Ford is one of two judges who ignited a firestorm of protest when he scored Pacquiao-Bradley I in favor of Bradley. Promoter Bob Arum led the assault. Now, looking around the media center, Duane recalled, "Things were pretty bad for a while. Everyone who owns a laptop is an expert on boxing. No judge would want to experience the brutal attacks I had to endure. My darkest day was having a United States senator (Harry Reid of Nevada) go on national television and say, 'My good friend, Duane Ford ....' You know the rest."

"I have no regrets," Ford continued. "There were two rounds I gave to Bradley that were hard for me to call. I still think I got them right. But nothing that happens tomorrow night will mean I was right, and nothing that happens tomorrow night will mean I was wrong. That fight was two years ago."

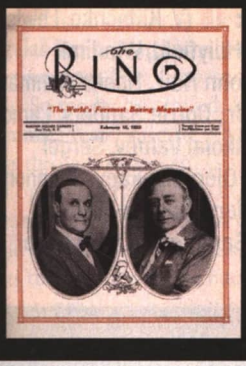
As Ford was finishing those thoughts, Bob Arum came over to say hello. For much of the week, the promoter had been denigrating the upcoming bout between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Marcos Maidana (promoted by rival Golden Boy Promotions) as "a 15-to-1 mismatch that no one wants to see because everyone already knows who will win."

"I hear they're bringing you back to judge Mayweather-Maidana," Arum said, putting a friendly hand on Duane's shoulder. "It's the only way they can sell it as a competitive fight." ★



Few would remember this man's role in the early days of HBO Boxing.

QUICK QUIZ



1. WHO WERE THE COMMENTATORS FOR HBO'S FIRST BOXING TELECAST?

2. AND, TO GIVE EQUAL TIME, WHO WERE THE COMMENTATORS FOR SHOWTIME'S FIRST BOXING TELECAST?

3. WHO WAS ON THE COVER OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE RING MAGAZINE?

Quick Quiz Answers: 1. The commentators for HBO's first boxing telecast, in 1973, were Don Dunphy and Floyd Patterson. Patterson was removed after that fight, and Dunphy teamed up with Larry Merchant and Sugar Ray Leonard. ★ **2.** Showtime's first boxing telecast was a taped fight between Marvin Hagler and John Mugabi in 1986. Tim Ryan, Al Bernstein and Gil Clancy were the commentators. The first live Showtime boxing telecast came three months later. The announcing team for that one was Ryan, Clancy and Hagler. ★ **3.** The first issue of THE RING was dated Feb. 15, 1922. The cover featured separate photos of American promoter Tex Rickard and Lord Lonsdale, of England.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM GREAT FIGHTERS

JACK JOHNSON: "When you look into a man's eyes, you can almost always tell when he's going to attack or is getting ready to throw a punch. Through much experience, I can even guess what type of punch and defend myself accordingly. I don't understand how this sort of mental transmission takes place. I use the advantage it gives me and leave the task of explaining it to people smarter than I."

MAX BAER: "I figure the fight game like this. I'm a puncher. I can knock them over with either hand. I figure the smartest of them will get careless once in 10 rounds. That's all I ask. Let him slip up once, and I've got him."

JIMMY MCLARNIN: "If you think I was great, you should have seen Harry Greb."

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Reflections: Conversations, Essays, and Other Writings*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: The number of heavyweight champions in each of the last 10 full decades.

1910s: 3 (Jack Johnson, Jess Willard, Jack Dempsey)

1920s: 2 (Dempsey, Gene Tunney)

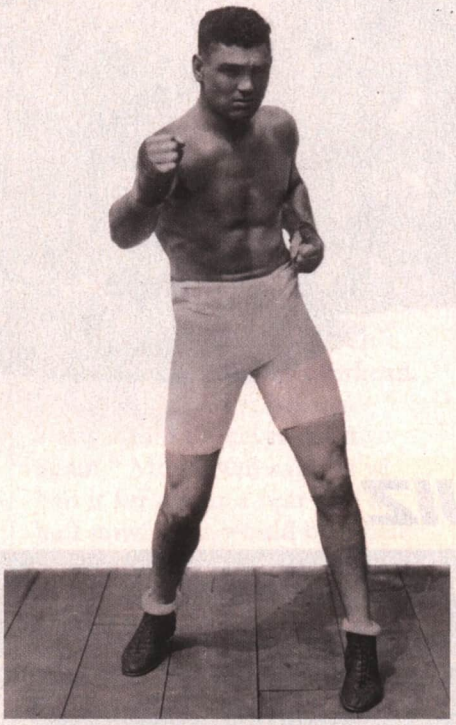
1930s: 6 (Max Schmeling, Jack Sharkey, Primo Carnera, Max Baer, James J. Braddock, Joe Louis)

1940s: 2 (Louis, Ezzard Charles)

1950s: 5 (Charles, Jersey Joe Walcott, Rocky Marciano, Floyd Patterson, Ingemar Johansson)

1960s: 7 (Johansson, Patterson, Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, Ernie Terrell, Joe Frazier, Jimmy Ellis)

1970s: 8 (Ellis, Frazier, George Foreman, Ali, Leon Spinks, Ken Norton, Larry Holmes, John Tate)



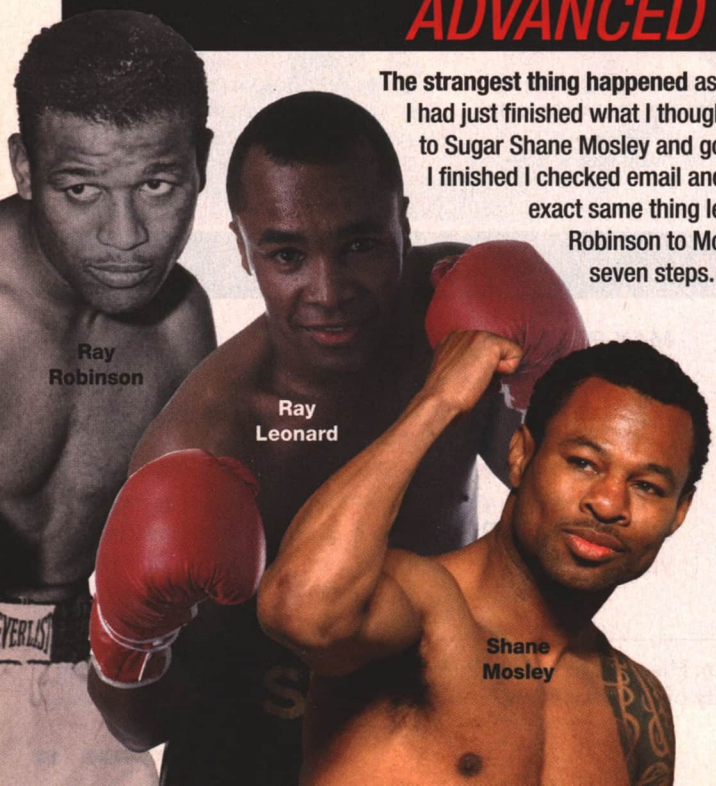
Jack Dempsey was heavyweight champ in the 1910s and 1920s.

1980s: 15 (Tate, Mike Weaver, Michael Dokes, Gerrie Coetzee, Holmes, Tim Witherspoon, Pinklon Thomas, Greg Page, Tony Tubbs, Michael Spinks, Trevor Berbick, Mike Tyson, James Smith, Tony Tucker, Francesco Damiani)

1990s: 17 (Damiani, Tyson, Buster Douglas, Evander Holyfield, Ray Mercer, Michael Moorer, Riddick Bowe, Lennox Lewis, Tommy Morrison, Michael Bentt, Herbie Hide, Oliver McCall, Foreman, Bruce Seldon, Frank Bruno, Henry Akinwande, Vitali Klitschko)

2000s: 18 (V. Klitschko, Lewis, Chris Byrd, Holyfield, Wladimir Klitschko, John Ruiz, Hasim Rahman, Roy Jones Jr., Corrie Sanders, Lamon Brewster, Nikolai Valuev, Sergei Liakhovich, Oleg Maskaev, Shannon Briggs, Ruslan Chagaev, Sultan Ibragimov, Sam Peter, David Haye)

ADVANCED DEGREES



The strangest thing happened as I was putting together the Advanced Degrees for this issue. I had just finished what I thought was an unusual linkage, connecting Sugar Ray Robinson to Sugar Shane Mosley and going through Sugar Ray Leonard to do it. Two minutes after I finished I checked email and found that reader Bill Barner of Sunrise, Fla., had done the exact same thing less than two hours earlier. No lie. Freeeeeaky. Our paths from Robinson to Mosley were slightly different but we were both able to do it in seven steps. Here's Bill's list. (Note: Robinson fought from 1940 to 1965, Leonard from 1977 to 1997 and Mosley from 1993 to 2013.)

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON fought …
JOEY ARCHER, who fought …
EMILE GRIFFITH, who fought …
ARMANDO MUNIZ, who fought …
SUGAR RAY LEONARD, who fought …
HECTOR CAMACHO SR., who fought …
PHILLIP HOLIDAY, who fought …
SUGAR SHANE MOSLEY

— **Michael Rosenthal**

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GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD

I had begun to wonder whether anyone cares these days about the heavyweight division outside of a few European countries. However, a recent heavyweight matchup on ESPN gave me hope. The heavyweight title fight between Bermane Stiverne and Chris Arreola on May 10 was the highest-rated boxing event on ESPN or ESPN2 since 2006 and highest on the main ESPN channel since 1998, demonstrating that a compelling, well-marketed heavyweight matchup can still attract viewers. And the heavyweights didn't disappoint. Stiverne scored a dramatic sixth-round knockout in what had been an entertaining, give-and-take fight. Stiverne's mandatory challenger is Deontay Wilder, the 6-foot-7 slugger from Alabama. Anyone who saw Stiverne-Arreola is going to want to see that no matter which network ends up broadcasting it. And a showdown with King Wladimir Klitschko could follow. I don't expect a return to the days of Ali, Frazier and Foreman or even Holyfield, Bowe and Lewis. I do see some life in a division that has been overlooked for years on these shores.

BAD

I don't know why Andre Ward has fought only once since September 2012 and I don't care: All I know is that the No. 2 fighter in the world should be doing his thing on a regular basis. Ward has been trying to get out of his contract with promoter Dan Goossen in what has become a bitter legal battle. So far, he has failed. He is signed through 2016. In the meantime, Ward said he wants to fight but has not received any offers through Goossen. Goossen evidently is looking for the right opportunity. He has no motivation to do otherwise because he stands to make no money by keeping Ward sidelined. That would be bad business. Plus, Goossen has said publicly that he wants to bring the focus back to his client's boxing career, which is the proper thing to do while the contract issue is worked out. However, the bottom line is this: Ward is sitting idle during the prime of his career. That hurts Ward, Goossen and the fans who admire the 2004 Olympic gold medalist's remarkable ability. What a waste.

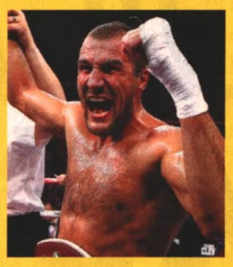
WORSE

Everyone understands why Deontay Wilder decided to confront the Internet troll who the heavyweight contender claims had been harrassing him, going so far as to threaten to harm his daughter. Enough was enough. So the 6-foot-7 Wilder agreed to "fight" the 6-foot troll (who apparently lost his only pro fight) at a gym in Hollywood and the result was no surprise: A video shows Wilder landing a few shots and the troll, well aware that he was in serious danger, capitulating. Justice served? Perhaps. The troll got what he deserved if Wilder's claims are accurate. It was also an incredibly stupid decision on Wilder's part. One, he could've killed or maimed the guy. That would've changed Wilder's life in an instant. And, two, he could've been sued by the guy even though some reports indicate he signed a waiver. Wilder is the No. 1 heavyweight prospect in the United States, blessed with the kind of punching power that fascinates fans. And he's on the cusp of making more money than the average person would dream is possible. Why risk it by accommodating someone like the troll? Get a restraining order.

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

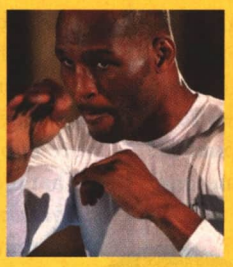
By **Anson Wainwright**



SERGEY KOVALEV

WBO LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC – "House, deep house, electronic, different DJs." ★ **CAR –** "Mercedes, BMW." ★ **FOOD –** "Healthy food. Also Russian cuisine." ★ **TATTOOS –** "Not interested, and do not have one." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Hockey player Pavel Bure." ★ **MOVIE –** "*Legend No. 17* (Russian movie about a hockey player)." ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "No time to play video games."



BERNARD HOPKINS

IBF AND WBA LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC – "Jazz, R&B." ★ **CAR –** "Old-school cars. I have two. I've got a 1967 convertible Chevy Chevelle. I have a 1966 hard-top, black, red-interior Lincoln Continental with side doors." ★ **FOOD –** "Pasta, Italian. No white wine though!" ★ **TATTOOS –** "No, none. I don't like needles." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Jim Brown." ★ **MOVIE –** "*Godfather.*" ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "Any boxing game."

ADONIS STEVENSON

RING AND WBC LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC – "Earth, Wind and Fire." ★ **CAR –** "Bentley." ★ **FOOD –** "Steak." ★ **TATTOOS –** "None." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Magic Johnson." ★ **MOVIE –** "*Superman* and *James Bond.*" ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "*Street Fighter.*"

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

RingTV.com readers believe at least to some degree in a big-punching heavyweight from Alabama. We asked: **Who is the biggest threat to heavyweight champ Wladimir Klitschko?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

DEONTAY WILDER 57.20

BERMANE STIVERNE 18.24

TYSON FURY 12.44

KUBRAT PULEV 7.55

DERECK CHISORA 2.35

VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV 2.21

Note: 2,846 readers voted

RIDDICK BOWE

Riddick Bowe might be most remembered for unfulfilled promise. "Big Daddy" certainly had his moments, though.

Bowe had all the attributes to become a great heavyweight – size (6 feet 5 inches, around 235 pounds at his peak), speed, athleticism, power and boxing ability. The only thing he seemed to lack in the end was a full commitment to the sport.

He first made a name for himself at the 1988 Olympics, when he was stopped by Lennox Lewis in the gold-medal match. Then, with the great Eddie Futch in his corner, he won his first 34 professional fights (29 by knockout) to become one of the more important figures in the sport.

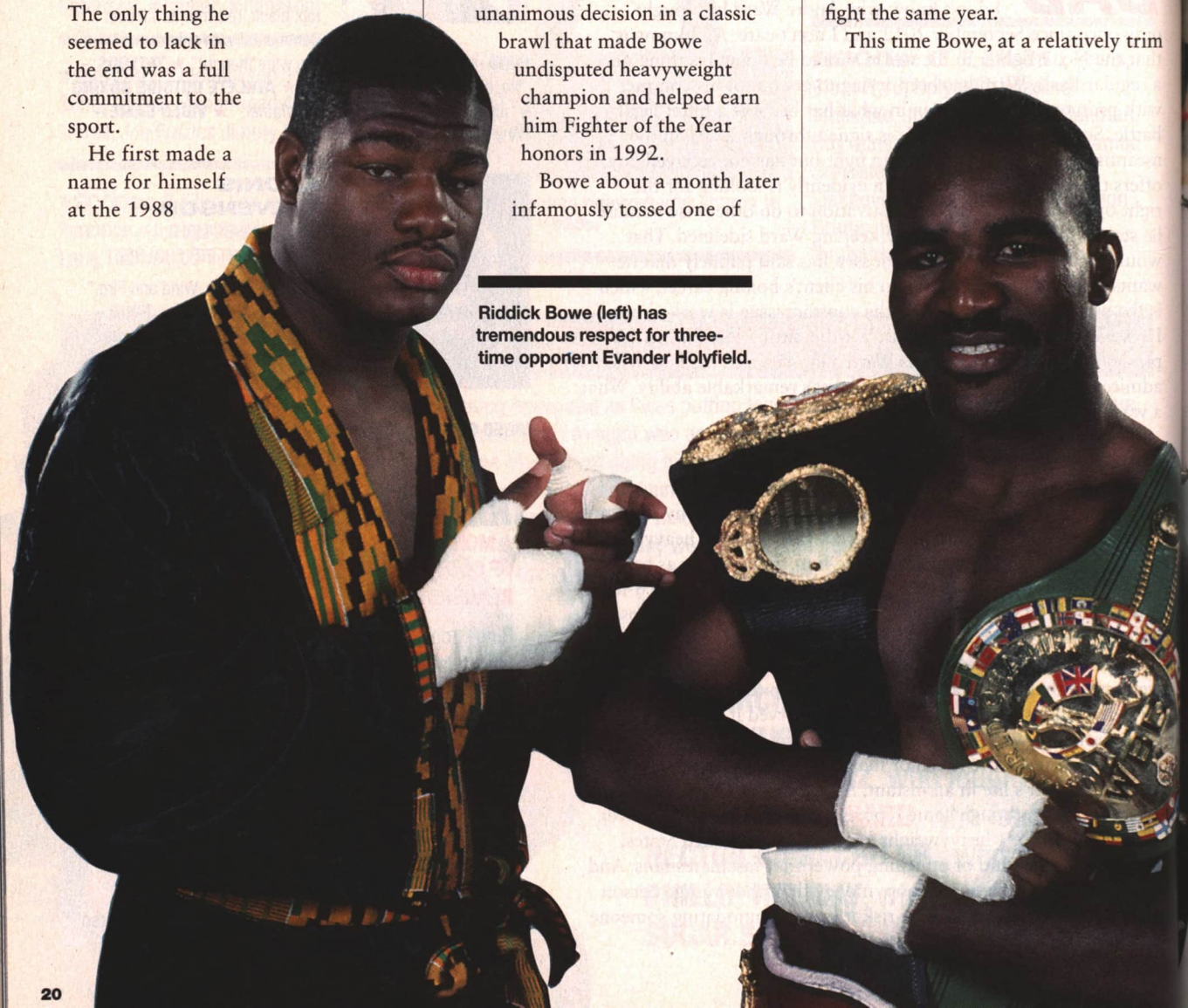
That included the first loss in Evander Holyfield's career, a unanimous decision in a classic brawl that made Bowe undisputed heavyweight champion and helped earn him Fighter of the Year honors in 1992.

Bowe about a month later infamously tossed one of his three belts – the WBC version – into a trash can rather than face amateur nemesis and mandatory challenger Lewis in his next fight. The two never fought, which was an unfortunate omission on the resume of both fighters.

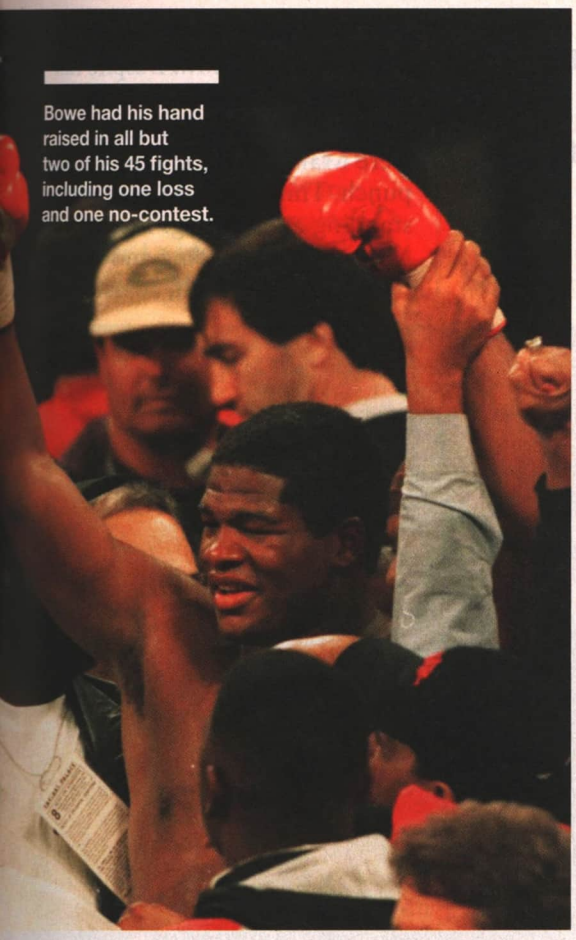
Bowe arguably peaked in the first Holyfield fight. The overweight native of New York lost his two remaining titles in his rematch with Holyfield in 1993, another spirited fight known best for "Fan Man," the rogue parachutist who landed in the ring during the fight.

In 1995, Bowe regained a major belt (the WBO version) by stopping then-unbeaten Herbie Hide in six rounds and defended it once against Jorge Luis Gonzalez before facing Holyfield once more in a non-title fight the same year.

This time Bowe, at a relatively trim



Riddick Bowe (left) has tremendous respect for three-time opponent Evander Holyfield.



Bowe had his hand raised in all but two of his 45 fights, including one loss and one no-contest.

240 pounds, stopped Holyfield in eight rounds in another grueling fight and his last great performance.

Bowe was soon stripped of his WBO title for fighting Andrew Golota instead of his mandatory challenger, Alexander Zolkin. Two fights with Golota were among the strangest in boxing history, as the big Pole was twice disqualified for throwing repeated low blows. Golota's actions sparked a melee after the first fight was stopped.

Bowe walked away from boxing after the second Golota, fight only to return as a bloated version of himself for three unimportant fights in the 2000s before finally retiring for good. He made one ill-advised foray into Muay Thai in 2013 but was stopped in the second round.

The 46-year-old resides in Fort Washington, Maryland, with his wife and daughter.

He was on tour in Great Britain recently when he agreed to discuss the best fighters he fought in 10 key categories.

BEST SKILLS

Evander Holyfield: He was better than anyone I ever fought. He could think, he could match wits with you. Our fights were so good because he could match me in the thinking aspect. He was always in such great shape.

BEST JAB

Pinklon Thomas: I guess he was from the old school. He came in with a great jab. He would throw a jab and snap your head back. ... After that I would have to say Tyrell Biggs.

BEST DEFENSE

Holyfield: He had the best defense, the best offense. I mean hands down he made you work. If you weren't in shape, it wasn't going to happen.

BEST CHIN

Holyfield: I could shake Evander and he'd come back with four, five shots. And if you weren't in shape, that's when he was going to get you. He was always going to come back at you.

BEST PUNCHER

Herbie Hide: You're not going to believe this [but] I would have to say Herbie Hide. ... He hit me and I thought, "Oh s---. I can't allow this guy to hit me again because I don't know what I'll see next." Initially I was trying to box him and he was real fast. I said I can't box him because he got me beat, so I fought him.

FASTEST HANDS

Holyfield: I've got to go with the "Real Deal" again. Evander had not only great hand speed but he put something on it. In the third fight he knocked me down. What he did was throw a [relatively light] left hook and I was thinking, "C'mon man." He threw another [weak] left hook and I was like, "Really?" I didn't realise that he was setting me up to relax. The third one he hit me with I seen the lights and the count. I'm like, "Damn, he fooled me again!" I got up and shook it off. I think at that point he shot his load. He really couldn't take me out like he wanted to. I [went] back to the corner, and I switched up on him and knocked him out.

FASTEST FEET

No one in particular: In that aspect there were a lot of guys I fought with real good feet. They didn't want to be hit. I go back to Evander. When I had him in trouble, he had damn good feet. (Laughs.) I know one thing: When you hit him and hurt him like in the first fight, he was hard to catch up with. I truly believe it was because he was able to maneuver in such a manner.

SMARTEST

Holyfield: No question, unequivocally. Here's a guy, you hit him with a left hook, he would keep his guard up, get close to you and turn his body. He was very smart in that aspect.

STRONGEST

Holyfield: Once again, as small as Evander was, he was probably the strongest.

BEST OVERALL

Holyfield: Unequivocally. Evander was smart, he was a thinker, he was in great shape, he had all the attributes to make him a great champion. That's why he and I fought against each other so hard and so well.

By David Greisman

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A REMATCH BETWEEN FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. AND MARCOS MAIDANA MAKES SENSE

You can believe as much as you wish that Floyd Mayweather Jr. is one of the best of the past 20 years, that his intelligence, athletic ability, skills and dedication to the sport have made him great, and that his brilliance in the ring backs up his braggadocio outside of it.

But don't believe for a minute that he wanted his bout with Marcos Maidana to go the way that it did. And don't believe for a single second that the reason he might face Maidana in a rematch is because the first fight was closer and more competitive than Mayweather's fights usually are.

He'll do it for the same reason he does anything: for the money.

It just so happens that there's plenty of money to be made in Mayweather-Maidana II, and that's because of how Mayweather-Maidana I went.

Mayweather didn't get hurt as he did against Shane Mosley. He didn't get dropped as he did unofficially against Zab Judah. But he was given a tougher fight than we're used to seeing him in. He got hit with more shots than usual. He lost rounds cleanly. He won the fight — but it was a fight.

He claims that he could've made it easier, that he wanted to give the fans a show. Despite his betting habits, no one wants to gamble on what might happen were Maidana to land the perfect punch. This wasn't Mayweather standing and trading. This was Mayweather standing and taking.

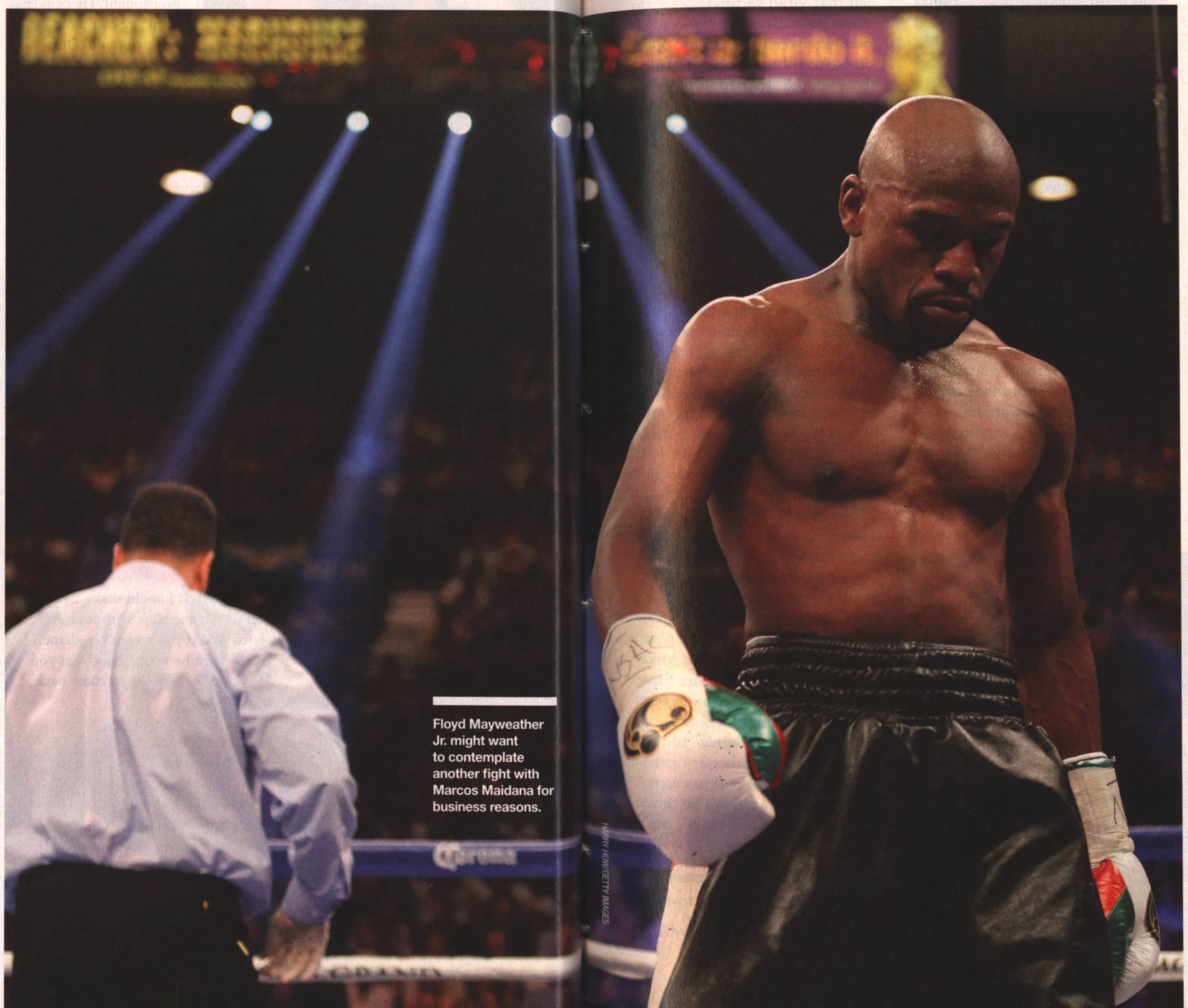
He took them well, adjusted appropriately, controlled the action down the stretch and won on two of the three judges' scorecards. Forget the majority decision over Canelo Alvarez and the split decision against Oscar De La Hoya; this was the closest fight Mayweather's had since Jose Luis Castillo in 2002. Mayweather fought Castillo again and won a decision in the immediate rematch. It would make sense for Mayweather to meet Maidana once more.

There aren't really any better options, not so long as Mayweather and Golden Boy won't work with Top Rank, which has welterweights Timothy Bradley and Manny Pacquiao in its promotional stable. Mayweather's fond of saying that all roads lead to him, and he's right in that his potential opponents would receive career-high paydays for the privilege of sharing a pay-per-view main event. Yet while Mayweather is the headline attraction whose bouts have become the Super Bowl of the Sweet Science, he still needs the right opponent for sales to skyrocket.

It's not yet Amir Khan. It's not yet Shawn Porter. It's not yet Keith Thurman. It's not yet any of the big names at 140 who could soon be coming to 147, though it could someday be Danny Garcia. It's also not any of the better fighters at 154, which Mayweather has only been willing to go to for three of the biggest box office attractions: Alvarez, Miguel Cotto and De La Hoya.

Cotto could be an appealing foe were he to beat Sergio Martinez for the 160-pound championship (in a fight scheduled for after this magazine went to press). Mayweather topped a game Cotto back in 2012. He knows he could beat Cotto again, and winning the RING and WBC middleweight titles would make Mayweather the true champion in a fifth division and a titleholder in a sixth. It would be a quick turnaround for Cotto from June to the presumed traditional mid-September date, but it could be done.

Or the action and drama of the first Maidana bout could sell the second. People will ask if Maidana can do it again, but better, and for the win. They will wonder whether Mayweather will dominate the way they had expected him to do before.



Floyd Mayweather Jr. might want to contemplate another fight with Marcos Maidana for business reasons.

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

They will again look for signs of Mayweather aging, and they will watch to see whether he engages less and moves more this time or if he finds another way and puts forth a great performance.

We would praise anyone else for taking a hard-fought win over a tough out like Maidana. Mayweather isn't just anyone, though, not when he puts himself forward as "TBE: The Best Ever."

There is unfinished business — for the sake of the history books, and to the benefit of Mayweather's bank accounts.

★

They say it's not the size, but how you use it. That helps explain the difference between Wladimir Klitschko, who is 6 feet 6 inches and 62-3 with 52 knockouts, and Julius Long, who was 7-foot-1 and lost more than he won. It also explains the difference between the delicate Klitschko of 2003-2004 and the dominant champion of the past decade.

But it's not just size that matters in the heavyweight division. It is depth, too, and what depth there is among boxing's biggest men is largely being wasted. While the pool of competition is becoming more crowded, their credentials by and large remain relatively shallow. Very few face each other. Rather, they merely dip their toes in the water, wading — and waiting — until the opportunity comes to dive into the deep end and learn whether they will sink or swim.

They are both prospects and prospectors, hoping to luck out and strike it rich.

They don't have to do much to receive a title shot. That's a problem endemic to the entire sport, but it's particularly obvious at heavyweight, where Wladimir Klitschko and his now-retired older brother, Vitali, have been so much better than those who actually deserved their opportunities (such as Alexander Povetkin) and simply batter those who didn't.

Wladimir Klitschko hit Alex Leapai with nearly 15 punches for every single shot that Leapai landed in their bout in late April. Klitschko was credited by CompuBox with landing 147 punches in a little less than five rounds, while Leapai struck with just 10. In terms of power-punches, Klitschko landed 80. Leapai had four, an average of less than one per round.

Leapai's sole win of note had come against unbeaten prospect Denis Boytsov. That is the kind of thin résumé we see from many Klitschko opponents these days and also from those vying for the belt that Vitali vacated.

Bermane Stiverne only needed victories over Ray Austin and Chris Arreola to be in line for a shot, and he stopped Arreola in the rematch to win his title in May. This was Arreola's second time challenging for a title (he'd lost to Vitali in 2009), and his most notable wins came against an over-the-hill Jameel McCline and the in-over-his-head Seth Mitchell.

Stiverne's mandatory challenger is Deontay Wilder, who has become the mandatory without being challenged. As impressive as his 31 knockouts in 31 wins may be, his position is based on potential, not on proof, not when the biggest wins were quick KOs of Audley Harrison, Sergei Liakhovich and Malik Scott.

This is not the stuff that legends are made of.

That's not to say there aren't interesting heavyweight bouts being made. Tyson Fury and Dereck Chisora are scheduled to have a rematch this July. Steve Cunningham and Amir Mansour battled it out this past April. Bryant Jennings and Mike Perez could face each other for the right to meet the winner of Stiverne vs. Wilder.

We've long seen that Wladimir Klitschko is clearly better than everyone else. The real fun can only come from pairing up those in the pool and seeing who can make a splash. RING

Alex Leapai (eating a punch from Wladimir Klitschko) had a thin resume, like many of the heavyweight champ's former opponents.

By **Brian Harty**

FOREMAN CALLS IT QUITS

The postwar dearth of professional Jewish boxers is a far cry from the heyday of the 1920s and 30s, when fighters like **Benny Leonard**, **Barney Ross** and **"Slapsie" Maxie Rosenbloom** were household names. According to Alan Bodner, author of *When Boxing Was a Jewish Sport*, there were 26 Jewish world champions betwenn 1910 and 1940. But even then, *Israeli* pros were an extreme rarity. It took until 2009 for one to win a world title and he, **Yuri Foreman**, announced his retirement in May.

Foreman was born in Belarus and moved to Israel with his family when he was 9 years old. Ten years after that he moved to the holy land of boxing, Brooklyn, and began training at Gleason's Gym. Though sometimes derisively called Yuri "Boreman" for his style, he won the WBA junior middleweight title with a wide unanimous decision over **Daniel Santos** on Nov. 14, 2009, in Las Vegas, then parlayed his world title into a fight with **Miguel Cotto** at Yankee Stadium. With a severely injured knee, Foreman was stopped in the ninth round.

His retirement had something to do with what Foreman said was an oppressive contract, though exactly how so wasn't clear at press time. Foreman's promoter, **Lou DiBella**, said the dispute was between the fighter and his manager, **Len Zimmerman**. Regardless, the June 7 bout with **Jorge Melendez** was off, ending Foreman's career on a four-fight winning streak. All along he was also studying on the side to be a rabbi.

It should be noted that the honor of "first Israeli world champion" is also claimed by **Johar Abu Lashin**, who was born in Nazareth. In 1997 he won the IBO junior welterweight belt, which is not widely recognized as a world title.

SAAD MUHAMMAD DIES

Matthew Saad Muhammad, the hard-punching Hall of Famer who reigned as light heavyweight champ from 1979 to 1981, died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) on May 25 in a Philadelphia hospital. He was 59. Muhammad (49-16-3, 35 knockouts) stopped Marvin Johnson to win the WBC title and made eight successful defenses in a strong era for 175-pounders. A full-length story on Muhammad will appear in the September 2014 issue.

Potential 2016 Olympians in the super heavyweight division breathed a sigh of relief after the Ukrainian boxing federation decided **Wladimir Klitschko** won't be eligible to compete in qualifying competitions.

One of Klitschko's alma maters, the Detroit gym founded by late trainer **Emanuel Steward**, announced in May that it will no longer be called "**Kronk**." The nonprofit in charge of the facility decided to abandon the name after Steward's family threatened to sue for trademark infringement. The family said it plans to open a new gym.

Fans making their way from the MGM Grand Garden Arena after the **Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Marcos Maidana** card found themselves in a stampede when a loud bang triggered fears of gunfire. It turned out to be a collapsing partition that caused the noise. Twenty-four people were reportedly taken to the hospital for injuries, none of which were life-threatening.

Mayweather was in the news prior to the fight when he (along with several other high-profile moneybags) declared himself "very interested" in purchasing the **L.A. Clippers** should embattled owner **Donald Sterling** be forced to sell the team.

Then, a couple days before the fight, Mayweather claimed on Facebook that he had broken up with girlfriend **Shantel Jackson** because she'd gotten an abortion and "killed our twin babies." Mayweather added that he is "totally against killing babies" and included an ultrasound photo of the fetuses. The message was soon deleted. Jackson responded, tweeting that Floyd's public behavior should make him ineligible to own a basketball franchise.

Adrien Broner is being sued by **Andrea Reyes**, a 23-year-old waitress who was one-third of Broner's threesome sex tape leaked last October.

Broner was also forced by the Nevada State Athletic Commission to get rid of his gigantic beard prior to his win over **Carlos Molina** on May 3, which is fortunate because it just would've been awkward to watch "Pops" brush it after the fight.

The fight over *Raging Bull* continued after The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of **Paula Patrella**, daughter of **Frank Patrella**, who wrote **Jake LaMotta's** biography of the same name and worked as a screenwriter on the movie. The decision means Patrella can pursue her longstanding infringement case against **MGM**, which argued that her inherited copyright claim had expired.

If all goes according to plan, three-time Canadian Olympic boxer **Mike Strange** will be well into his "BoxRun" by the time you read this. The 43-year-old plans to run 90 marathons in 90 days, ending on Aug. 9, as he covers about 2,400 miles between St. John's, Newfoundland, and Niagara Falls, Ontario, to raise money for childhood cancer research. The endeavor is an homage to the "Run for Hope" of **Terry Fox**, who ran 3,339 miles in 143 days on a prosthetic leg before dying of cancer in 1981.

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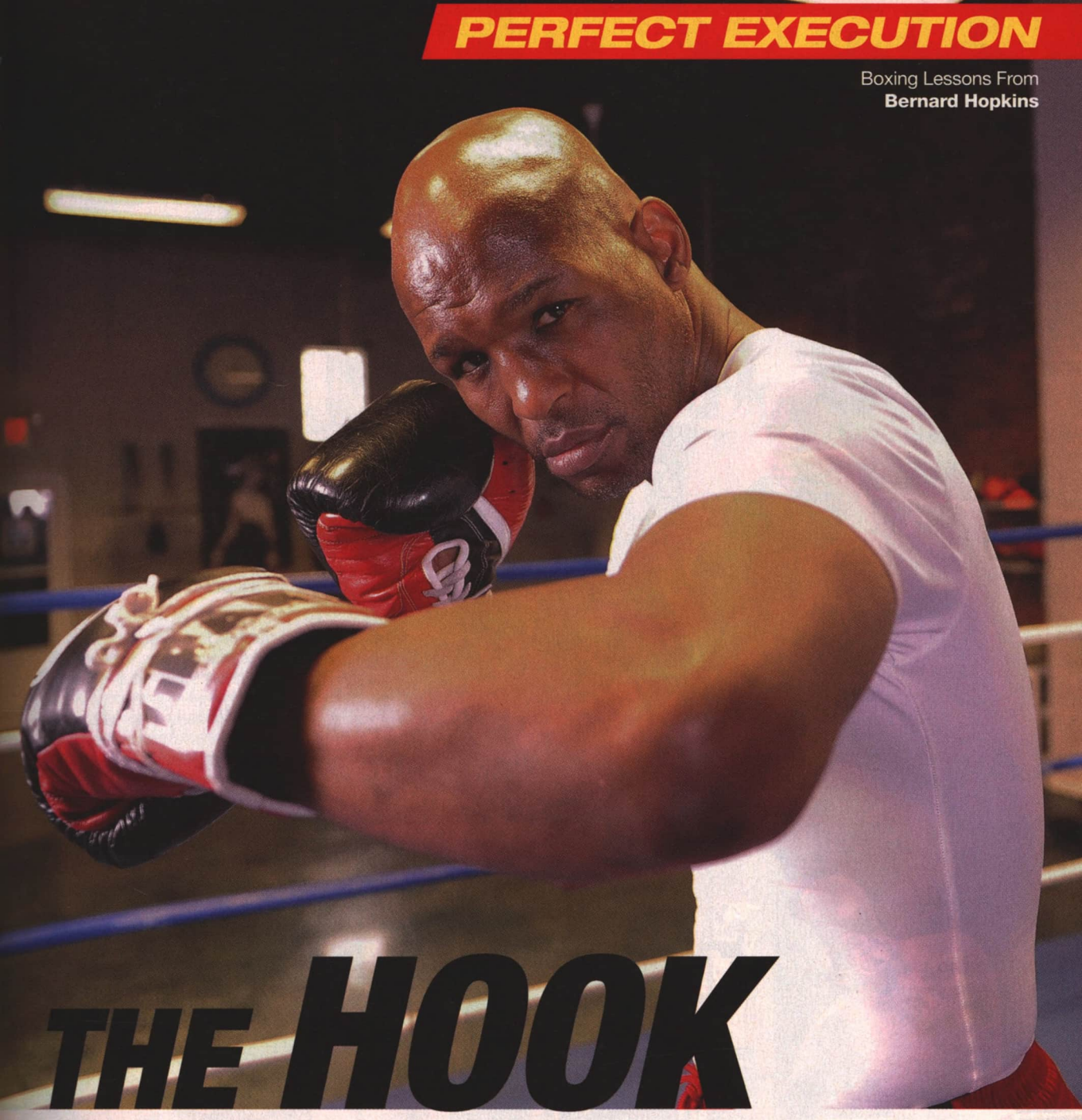


THE HOOK

A DEVASTATING PUNCH ... IF THROWN CORRECTLY

By **Joseph Santoliquito**

Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why we asked him to play the leading role in a resurrected version of "Perfect Execution."

Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins will demonstrate a particular skill and explain how to execute it. Photographs of Hopkins and assistant Danny Davis will help you understand the moves.

Also, for the first time, we will have an accompanying video on our website, RingTV.com, which will allow you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

This month: The hook, one of boxing's most effective power punches.

"The hook is important," Hopkins said, "because it's a punch that both southpaws and orthodox fighters won't see coming when they have their hands down." »

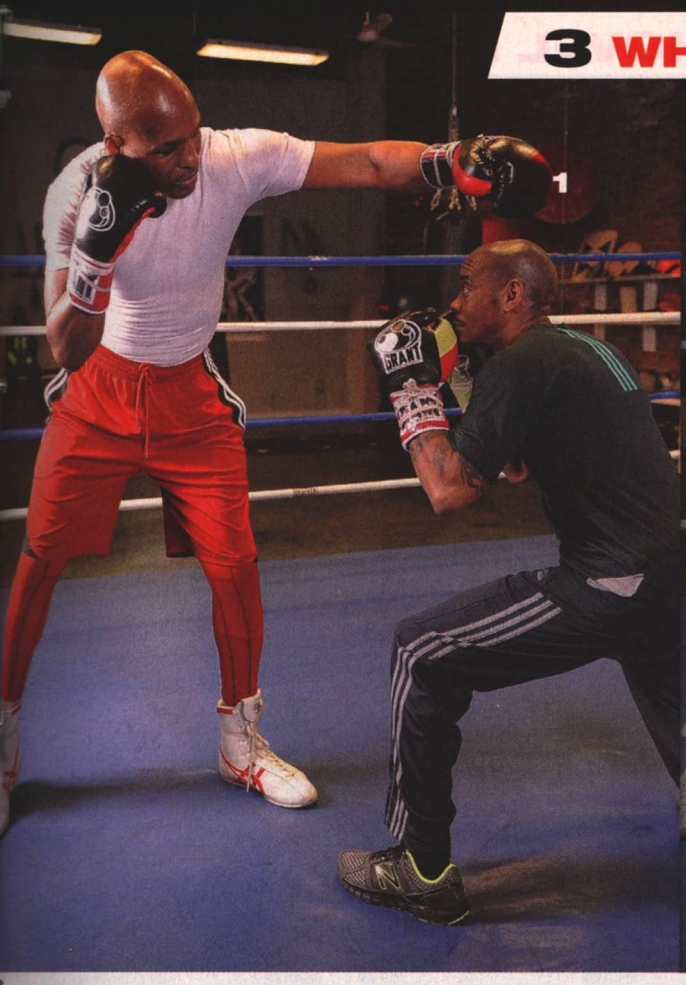
1 THROWING THE HOOK

IT'S BACK

Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals has returned and will appear each month in THE RING. We've added a video component to the feature. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code above or go to http://bit.ly/bhophook.

2 YOUR TARGETS

3 WHAT NOT TO DO



LESSON 1

Step to the left when you're throwing the left hook. If you're left-handed, you step to the right to throw the right hook. ❶ When throwing the hook, everything starts with your footwork. You need leverage, balance and positioning. That's everything. ❷ My arm is locked at the elbow. It's tight. Notice how my feet are positioned in throwing the hook. It's like swinging a bat. ❸ I bend my knees slightly, and I shift my weight from my right foot to my left foot as I follow through with the hook. You need to find that center of power. The power of the hook comes from my legs and my hips.

LESSON 2

Here, I dip slightly and target Danny's ribs with the hook. Again, it's about positioning and how close I am to Danny. I land the hook to his body ❶, and I can work off the hook to the body by landing a hook to the head ❷. A lot of it is also hand speed. The crippling hook to the body sets up the hook to the head.

LESSON 3

See, here I'm way out of position against Danny. I throw the hook and leave myself exposed to get countered ❶. Danny ducks. I miss with the hook because I'm throwing the hook way out of position. Here, Danny sees the opening, and he counters me ❷. That's not what to do with the hook.

JANICE VALENTIN

4 SHOVEL HOOK

LESSON 4

This is a form of the hook that only a few fighters in boxing throw, that's me and Floyd Mayweather Jr.. I call it the shovel hook, because the way you throw it is almost like you're shoveling. Danny here is showing a tight guard. I want to split that guard. ❶ You can do that with the shovel hook, which comes from lower, instead of across my body. The difference between the shovel hook and uppercut is that the shovel hook comes off an angle and is thrown with my left hand. RING

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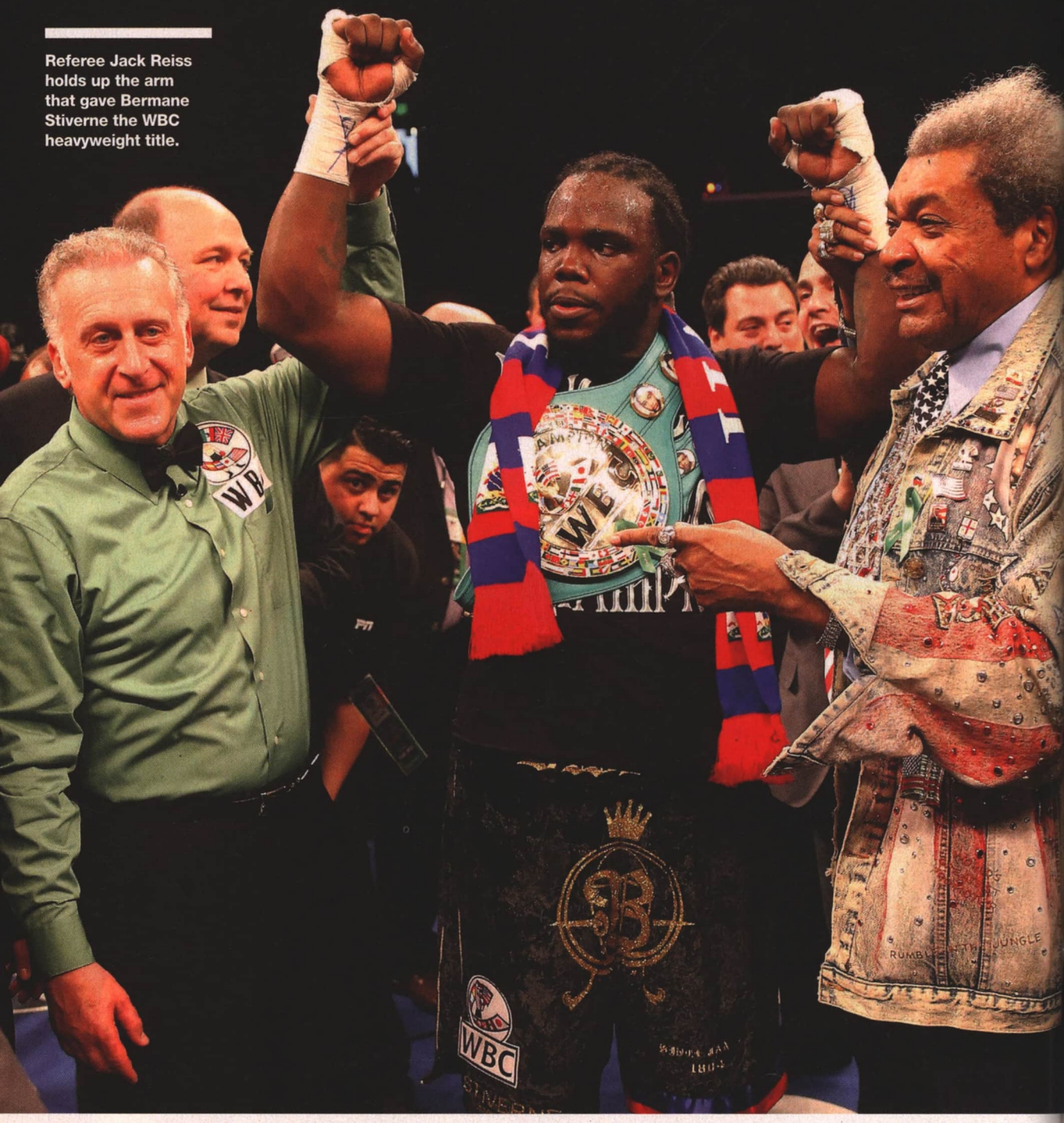


Referee Jack Reiss holds up the arm that gave Bermane Stiverne the WBC heavyweight title.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

BERMANE STIVERNE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Bermane Stiverne got a lot accomplished on May 10 at the Galen Center in Los Angeles.

The Haitian-Canadian defeated top American contender Chris Arreola for a second time, this time by a spectacular sixth-round knockout on national television. He thus won the vacant WBC

heavyweight title, the first belt not worn by a Klitschko since David Haye in 2011. And, of course, he put himself in position to make a great deal of money.

And it all happened largely because of one punch, a big right hand from which Arreola could never truly recover.

Stiverne and Arreola were engaged in a competitive fight in the final round when, BAM!, an overhand right found Arreola's chin and sent him to the canvas. Arreola got up but was essentially finished. He went down again seconds later – and managed to get up again – but couldn't defend himself, prompting referee Jack Reiss to stop the fight to protect him at 2:02.

Stiverne (24-1-1, 21 KOs) couldn't contain his glee in the ring afterward. And why not? He had just realized a dream by becoming a heavyweight titleholder and was well aware of what the victory meant going forward.

Stiverne's mandatory challenger is Deontay Wilder, a 6-foot-7 power-puncher who would make for a fascinating first defense. However, that doesn't mean Wilder is next. Don King, Stiverne's promoter, made it clear that he will consider all options. And, of course, Wladimir Klitschko, the RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titleholder, is the ultimate goal because of the money Stiverne would stand to make.

No matter what happens in the future, though, he'll always have a special May 10 to remember.

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Bermane "Not Klitschko" Stiverne captured the vacant WBC title with a sixth-round knockout of Mexican-American hopeful Chris Arreola. Stiverne held his spot at No. 3 while Arreola (No. 6 last month) slipped a notch. Robert Helenius (No. 5 last month) has been MIA for well over a year, so he was ousted. The cumulative movement left Vyacheslav Glazkov (No. 7 last month) at No. 5, Tomasz Adamek (No. 8 last month) at No. 6, and Deontay Wilder and Bryant Jennings a step higher than their previous ratings of No. 9 and No. 10, respectively. Tony Thompson moved in at No. 10 for the umpteenth time.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Nathan Cleverly (No. 8 last month) departed to seek his fortune at cruiserweight. No. 9 Isaac Chilemba and No. 10 Eleider Alvarez each gained a spot, and Andrzej Fonfara, who by the time you read this will have faced division champion Adonis Stevenson, shored up the list at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: J'Leon Love (unrated last month) entered the ratings at No. 10 after his unanimous-decision victory over Marco Antonio Periban (No. 9 last month), who was knocked off the list. Maxim Vlasov (No. 10 last month) moved up to No. 9.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Keith Thurman (No. 7 last month) continued to meet expectations and again moved up one spot after handling former titleholder Julio Diaz (unrated) with a third-round TKO. Thurman then returned to No. 7 after Marcos Maidana (No. 8 last month) surpassed expectations in his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. and jumped to No. 6. Robert Guerrero (No. 6 last month) was relegated to No. 8, and No. 9 Adrien Broner was dropped after fighting Carlos Molina (unrated) at 140 pounds. He was replaced by Amir Khan (No. 3 junior welterweight last month), who took care of unrated Luis Collazo on the Mayweather-Maidana undercard.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: With Khan's departure, Nos. 4-6 gained a spot and the downsized Broner entered at No. 6. Undefeated Ukrainian Viktor Postol (No. 10 last month) knocked out unrated Selcuk Aydin and swapped places with No. 9 Khabib Allakhverdiev.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No. 9-rated Takahiro Ao fought over the 130-pound limit for the third time in a row, so he was dropped from the list. Sergio Thompson moved up a spot from No. 10 and Costa Rican Bryan Vasquez filled the vacancy at the bottom.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Javier Fortuna (No. 7 last month) has been flirting with junior lightweight too long, so he was dropped, and Ukrainian amateur prodigy Vasyl Lomachenko arrived at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Tepparith Singwancha's last few fights have been at 118 pounds, so he was kicked out of his No. 4 seat. This pulled everyone from No. 5 Zolani Tete to No. 10 Daiki Kameda up and left No. 10 open for WBA titleholder Kohei Kono.

FLYWEIGHTS: Undefeated Thai fighter Amnat Ruenroeng returned to the ratings at No. 7 on the strength of a title-winning unanimous decision over Kazuto Ioka (No. 2 junior flyweight). That pushed No. 10 Milan Melindo off the list.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: THE RING crowned a 108-pound champion in emphatic fashion as No. 1-rated Donnie Nietes delivered a ninth-round knockout of No. 3 Moises Fuentes in Manila. No. 2 Ioka stayed put after his above-weight loss to Ruenroeng, as did Fuentes, so IBF titleholder Johnriel Casimero became the new No. 1. Nietes' move to the top spot lifted everyone else up a notch, and Filipino Randy Petalcorin moved in at No. 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

Alex Leapai (left) had little hope of ending Wladimir Klitschko's reign as RING champion.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**	Ukraine | 62-3-0 (52 KOs)
1.	**KUBRAT PULEV**	Bulgaria | 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN**	Russia | 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
3.	**BERMANE STIVERNE**	Canada | 24-1-1 (21 KOs)
4.	**TYSON FURY**	U.K. | 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
5.	**VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV**	Ukraine | 17-0-1 (11 KOs)
6.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK**	Poland | 49-3-0 (29 KOs)
7.	**CHRIS ARREOLA**	U.S. | 36-4-0 (31 KOs)
8.	**DEONTAY WILDER**	U.S. | 31-0-0 (31 KOs)
9.	**BRYANT JENNINGS**	U.S. | 18-0-0 (10 KOs)
10.	**TONY THOMPSON**	U.S. | 39-4-0 (26 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**	Cuba | 28-1-0 (14 KOs)
1.	**MARCO HUCK**	Germany | 37-2-1 (26 KOs)
2.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**	Poland | 49-2-1 (35 KOs)
3.	**DENIS LEBEDEV**	Russia | 25-2-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**OLA AFOLABI**	U.K. | 20-3-4 (9 KOs)
5.	**GRIGORY DROZD**	Russia | 38-1-0 (27 KOs)
6.	**ILUNGA MAKABU**	Congo | 16-1-0 (15 KOs)
7.	**DMYTRO KUCHER**	Ukraine | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
8.	**FIRAT ARSLAN**	Germany | 33-7-2 (21 KOs)
9.	**MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**	Poland | 32-1-0 (23 KOs)
10.	**THABISO MCHUNU**	South Africa | 16-1-0 (11 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**ADONIS STEVENSON**	Canada | 23-1-0 (20 KOs)
1.	**BERNARD HOPKINS**	U.S. | 55-6-2 (32 KOs)
2.	**SERGEY KOVALEV**	Russia | 24-0-1 (22 KOs)
3.	**JEAN PASCAL**	Canada | 29-2-1 (17 KOs)
4.	**JUERGEN BRAEHMER**	Germany | 43-2-0 (32 KOs)
5.	**CHAD DAWSON**	U.S. | 31-3-0 (17 KOs)
6.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV**	Kazakhstan | 14-2-0 (9 KOs)
7.	**TAVORIS CLOUD**	U.S. | 24-2-0 (19 KOs)
8.	**ISAAC CHILEMBA**	Malawi | 22-2-2 (9 KOs)
9.	**ELEIDER ALVAREZ**	Colombia | 14-0-0 (8 KOs)
10.	**ANDRZEJ FONFARA**	Poland | 25-2-0 (15 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**ANDRE WARD**	U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
1.	**CARL FROCH**	U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
2.	**MIKKEL KESSLER**	Denmark | 46-3-0 (35 KOs)
3.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM**	Armenia | 40-4-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ**	Russia | 46-4-0 (26 KOs)
5.	**GEORGE GROVES**	U.K. | 19-1-0 (15 KOs)
6.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**	South Africa | 22-0-2 (13 KOs)
7.	**SAKIO BIKA**	Cameroon | 32-5-3 (21 KOs)
8.	**JAMES DEGALE**	U.K. | 18-1-0 (12 KOs)
9.	**MAXIM VLASOV**	Russia | 29-1-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**J'LEON LOVE**	U.S. | 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs)

1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 29-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 39-3-2 (18 KOs)
3. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 30-2-0 (16 KOs)
4. **PETER QUILLIN**
U.S. | 31-0-0 (22 KOs)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
U.K. | 30-5-0 (20 KOs)
6. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
Mexico | 59-6-1 (51 KOs)
7. **MARTIN MURRAY**
U.K. | 27-1-1 (12 KOs)
8. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
Cameroon | 30-1-0 (18 KOs)
9. **CURTIS STEVENS**
U.S. | 27-4-0 (20 KOs)
10. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
U.K. | 19-0-0 (10 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 46-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 43-1-1 (31 KOs)
2. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 19-1-2 (12 KOs)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 38-4-0 (31 KOs)
4. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 22-5-2 (6 KOs)
5. **AUSTIN TROUT**
U.S. | 26-2-0 (14 KOs)
6. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
U.S. | 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
7. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
U.S. | 34-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **WILLIE NELSON**
U.S. | 21-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **JERMELL CHARLO**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
10. **ISHE SMITH**
U.S. | 26-6-0 (12 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 46-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 56-5-2 (38 KOs)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (12 KOs)
3. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
4. **SHAWN PORTER**
U.S. | 24-0-1 (15 KOs)
5. **KELL BROOK**
U.K. | 32-0-0 (22 KOs)
6. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina | 35-4-0 (31 KOs)
7. **KEITH THURMAN**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (21 KOs)
8. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
U.S. | 31-2-1 (18 KOs)
9. **AMIR KHAN**
U.K. | 29-3-0 (19 KOs)
10. **PAULIE MALIGNAGGI**
U.S. | 33-6-0 (7 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **DANNY GARCIA**
U.S. | 28-0-0 (16 KOs)

1. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 34-3-0 (32 KOs)
2. **RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV**
Russia | 23-2-0 (16 KOs)
3. **LAMONT PETERSON**
U.S. | 32-2-1 (16 KOs)
4. **MIKE ALVARADO**
U.S. | 34-3-0 (23 KOs)
5. **ZAB JUDAH**
U.S. | 42-9-0 (29 KOs)
6. **ADRIEN BRONER**
U.S. | 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
7. **DIERRY JEAN**
Canada | 25-1-0 (17 KOs)
8. **JESSIE VARGAS**
U.S. | 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
9. **VIKTOR POSTOL**
Ukraine | 26-0-0 (11 KOs)
10. **KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV**
Russia | 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 34-3-0 (13 KOs)
2. **RICHAR ABRIL**
Cuba | 18-3-1 (8 KOs)
3. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (16 KOs)
4. **RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
Mexico | 29-6-1 (17 KOs)
5. **RICKY BURNS**
U.K. | 36-3-1 (11 KOs)
6. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
U.K. | 37-2-0 (27 KOs)
7. **DANIEL ESTRADA**
Mexico | 32-2-1 (24 KOs)
8. **OMAR FIGUEROA**
U.S. | 23-0-1 (17 KOs)
9. **JUAN DIAZ**
U.S. | 39-4-0 (19 KOs)
10. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela | 36-3-0 (23 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 20-0-1 (17 KOs)
2. **MIKEY GARCIA**
U.S. | 34-0-0 (28 KOs)
3. **RANCES BARTHELEMY**
Cuba | 19-0-0 (12 KOs)
4. **TAKASHI MIURA**
Japan | 27-2-2 (20 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 30-2-2 (20 KOs)
6. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 27-2-2 (16 KOs)
7. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dominican Rep. | 21-2-1 (11 KOs)
8. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
U.S. | 25-1-0 (10 KOs)
9. **SERGIO THOMPSON**
Mexico | 29-3-0 (26 KOs)
10. **BRYAN VASQUEZ**
Costa Rica | 33-1-1 (17 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 55-8-0 (47 KOs)
2. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico | 26-1-1 (14 KOs)
3. **EVGENY GRADOVICH**
Russia | 18-0-0 (9 KOs)
4. **SIMPIWE VETYEKA**
South Africa | 26-2-0 (16 KOs)
5. **NICHOLAS WALTERS**
Jamaica | 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
6. **BILLY DIB**
Australia | 36-3-0 (21 KOs)
7. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 32-2-0 (21 KOs)
8. **RONNY RIOS**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (10 KOs)
9. **LEE SELBY**
U.K. | 19-1-0 (7 KOs)
10. **VASYL LOMACHENKO**
Ukraine | 1-1-0 (1 KO)*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs)

1. **CARL FRAMPTON**
U.K. | 18-0-0 (13 KOs)
2. **LEO SANTA CRUZ**
U.S. | 27-0-1 (15 KOs)
3. **KIKO MARTINEZ**
Spain | 31-4-0 (23 KOs)
4. **SCOTT QUIGG**
U.K. | 28-0-2 (21 KOs)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia | 39-6-1 (28 KOs)
6. **VICTOR TERRAZAS**
Mexico | 37-3-1 (21 KOs)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico | 49-8-2 (24 KOs)
8. **JEFFREY MATHEBULA**
South Africa | 27-5-2 (14 KOs)
9. **JHONATAN ROMERO**
Colombia | 23-1-0 (12 KOs)
10. **GENESIS SERVANIA**
Philippines | 24-0-0 (10 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

The record shown for Vasyl Lomachenko is the one listed by boxrec.com. However, Lomachenko was paid to participate in the World Series of Boxing six times during 2013, with a record of 6-0.

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama | 35-2-1 (12 KOs)
2. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
Japan | 21-0-2 (16 KOs)
3. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 32-1-0 (17 KOs)
4. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
Philippines | 33-3-3 (20 KOs)
5. **HUGO RUIZ**
Mexico | 34-2-0 (30 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana | 29-5-0 (22 KOs)
7. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
U.K. | 23-2-1 (10 KOs)
8. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 29-0-0 (18 KOs)
9. **JULIO CEJA**
Mexico | 27-1-0 (25 KOs)
10. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
Japan | 17-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina | 42-1-2 (23 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
Mexico | 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
Thailand | 27-3-1 (25 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
South Africa | 18-3-0 (16 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.**
Mexico | 17-2-1 (9 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
Philippines | 25-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand | 53-1-1 (19 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
Mexico | 29-2-0 (24 KOs)
9. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 29-4-0 (18 KOs)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan | 30-8-0 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
Japan | 20-3-0 (10 KOs)

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua | 39-0-0 (33 KOs)
2. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
Mexico | 26-2-0 (19 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
U.S. | 33-4-0 (19 KOs)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico | 49-8-0 (29 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina | 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa | 30-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
Thailand | 13-0-0 (5 KOs)
8. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
Japan | 18-2-1 (11 KOs)
9. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
Mexico | 32-3-1 (28 KOs)
10. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 37-4-0 (26 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines | 33-1-4 (19 KOs)

1. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
Philippines | 20-2-0 (12 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan | 14-1-0 (9 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
Mexico | 19-2-1 (10 KOs)
4. **NAOYA INOUE**
Japan | 6-0-0 (5 KOs)
5. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico | 29-3-1 (18 KOs)
6. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
Mexico | 21-1-1 (14 KOs)
7. **FELIX ALVARADO**
Nicaragua | 18-1-0 (15 KOs)
8. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
Peru | 32-8-0 (13 KOs)
9. **TAKUMA INOUE**
Japan | 2-0-0 (0 KOs)
10. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
Philippines | 21-1-1 (16 KOs)

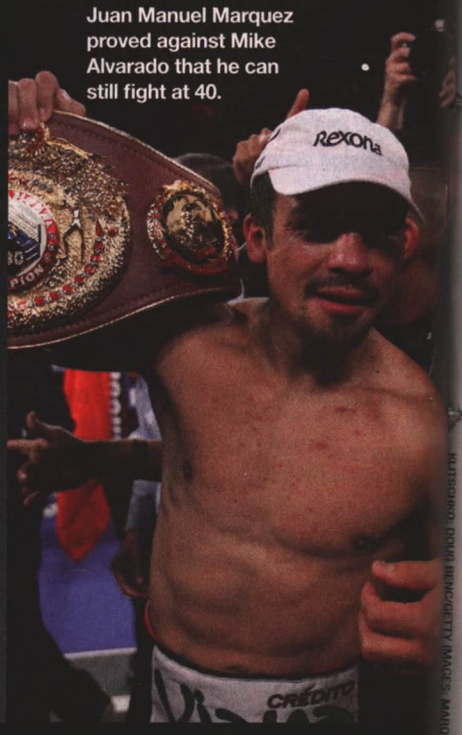
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
South Africa | 25-1-0 (8 KOs)
2. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
Thailand | 34-0-0 (11 KOs)
3. **DENVER CUELLO**
Philippines | 33-5-6 (21 KOs)
4. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan | 27-6-0 (10 KOs)
5. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
Nicaragua | 27-0-1 (16 KOs)
6. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
Mexico | 14-2-0 (10 KOs)
7. **OSVALDO NOVOA**
Mexico | 13-4-1 (8 KOs)
8. **MERLITO SABILLO**
Philippines | 23-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **RYUJI HARA**
Japan | 17-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
Mexico | 28-5-0 (20 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 46-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT/ JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
2. **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 62-3-0 (52 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 56-5-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
5. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (12 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 56-7-1 (40 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
7. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
8. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
9. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 43-1-1 (31 KOs) | JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
10. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT



Juan Manuel Marquez proved against Mike Alvarado that he can still fight at 40.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

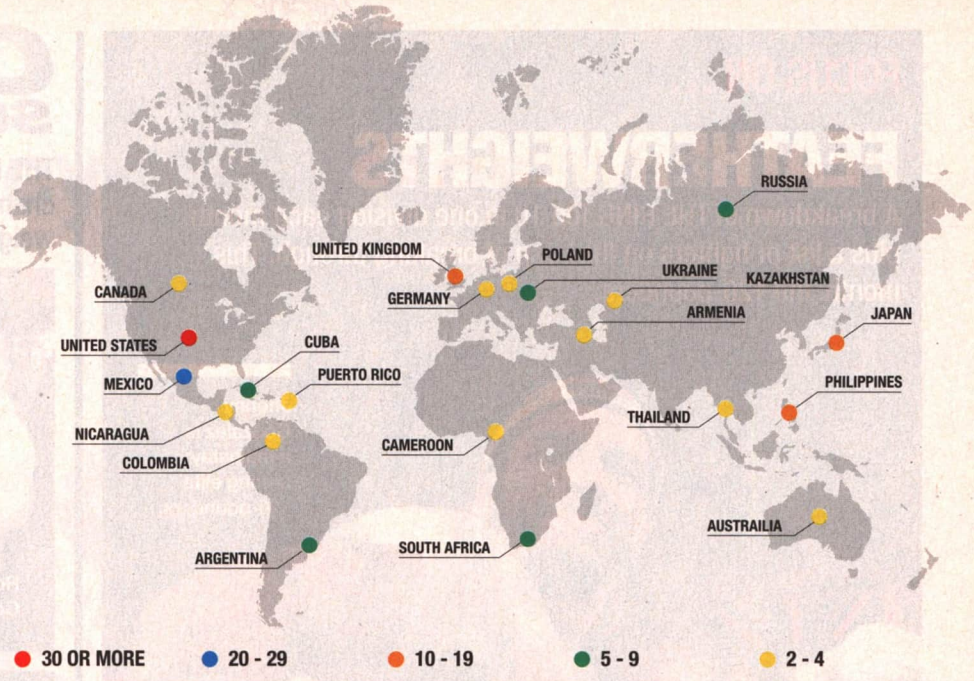
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	38 *	▲ 2
MEXICO	28	▼ 1
UNITED KINGDOM	16	▼ 1
JAPAN	15	
PHILIPPINES	10	
RUSSIA	9	
SOUTH AFRICA	7	
ARGENTINA	5	
CUBA	5	
UKRAINE	5	▲ 1
CANADA	4	
GERMANY	4	
THAILAND	4	
POLAND	3	▲ 1
NICARAGUA	3	
ARMENIA	2	
AUSTRALIA	2	
CAMEROON	2	
COLOMBIA	2	
KAZAKHSTAN	2	
PUERTO RICO	2	
BULGARIA	1	
CONGO	1	
COSTA RICA	1	▲ 1
DENMARK	1	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	▼ 1
GHANA	1	
JAMAICA	1	
MALAWI	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
SPAIN	1	
VENEZUELA	1	

Out (from last month): Finland (Robert Helenius). In: Costa Rica (Bryan Vazquez)

** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*

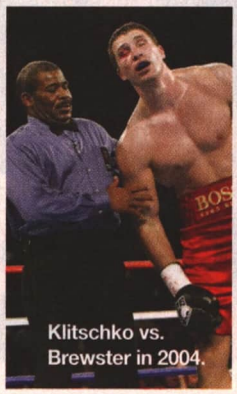


U.S. VS. AMERICAS

The U.S. has surged to 38 fighters among the 181 rated by THE RING, 10 ahead of rival Mexico. The Americans can't claim to have more rated fighters than all the other nations in the Americas (North, South and Central) combined but they're moving in that direction. Here's a look.

DIVISION	U.S.	AMERICAS
HEAVYWEIGHTS	4	1
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	1
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	2
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	7	4
WELTERWEIGHTS	6	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	6	2
LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	5
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	6
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	4
BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	3
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	4
FLYWEIGHTS	1	6
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	5
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	4
TOTAL	38	55

LAST LOSSES


Klitschko vs. Brewster in 2004.

RING champions don't lose many fights, or they wouldn't be at the pinnacle of the sport. However, six of the 10 champs have tasted defeat. Here is a list of the RING champions and their most recent setbacks.

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO, HEAVYWEIGHT: 2004 (LAMON BREWSTER)

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ, CRUISERWEIGHT: 2008 (WAYNE BRAITHWAITE)

ADONIS STEVENSON, LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: 2010 (DARNELL BOONE)

ANDRE WARD, SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: UNDEFEATED

SERGIO MARTINEZ, MIDDLEWEIGHT: 2009 (PAUL WILLIAMS)

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR., JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT AND WELTERWEIGHT: UNDEFEATED

DANNY GARCIA, JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: UNDEFEATED

GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX, JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: UNDEFEATED

AKIRA YAEGASHI, FLYWEIGHT: 2012 (KAZUTO IOKA)

DONNIE NIETES, JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT: 2004 (ANGKY ANGKOTTA)

FOCUS ON . . .

FEATHERWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 126-pounders.

Jhonny Gonzalez is a mainstay among elite 126-pounders.

MOST WEEKS RATED: JHONNY GONZALEZ **161**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: VASYL LOMACHENKO **3**

OLDEST: GONZALEZ **32**

YOUNGEST: RONNY RIOS **24**

MOST FIGHTS: GONZALEZ **63**

FEWEST FIGHTS: LOMACHENKO **2***

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: (TIE) EVGENY GRADOVICH, RIOS, AND NICHOLAS WALTERS **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: LOMACHENKO **50 PERCENT***

MOST KOS: GONZALEZ **47**

FEWEST KOS: LOMACHENKO **1**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: (TIE) RIOS AND WALTERS **23 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: GONZALEZ (WBC), GRADOVICH (IBF), SIMPIWE VETYEKA (WBA)

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): RENE ALVARADO, JESUS CUELLAR, SATOSHI HOSONO, ALEXANDER MISKIRTCHIAN, GARY RUSSELL JR.

** Lomachenko was paid to fight in the World Series of Boxing six times prior to the two pro fights recognized by boxrec.com. Including his six victories in the WSB, his winning percentage would be 85.7, still the lowest in the division.*

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Roman Gonzalez

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

LEM SATTERFIELD RINGTV.COM STAFF WRITER
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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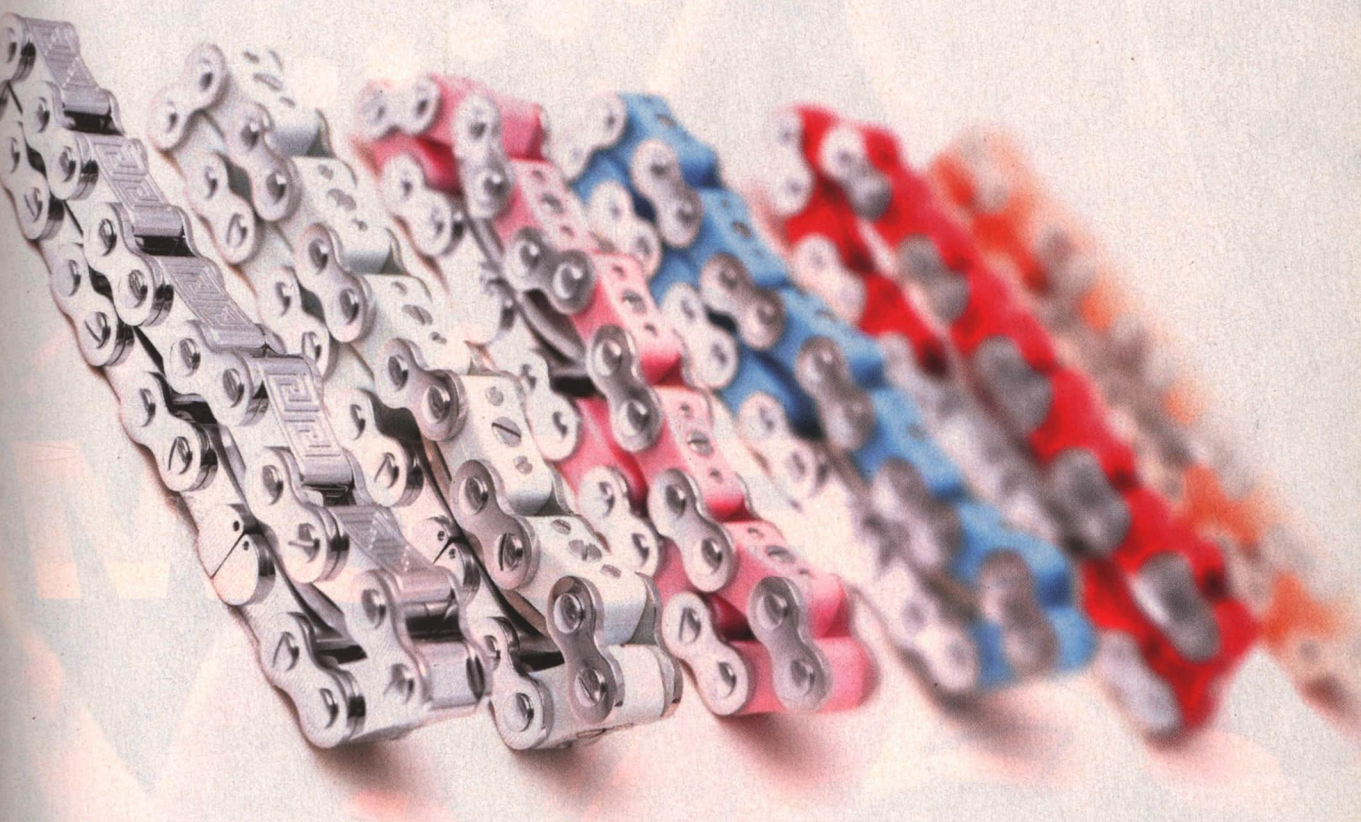

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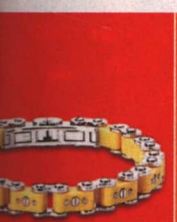
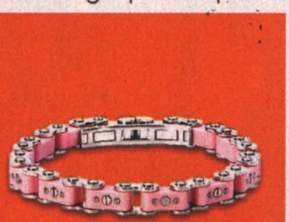


STYLE PU YELLOW

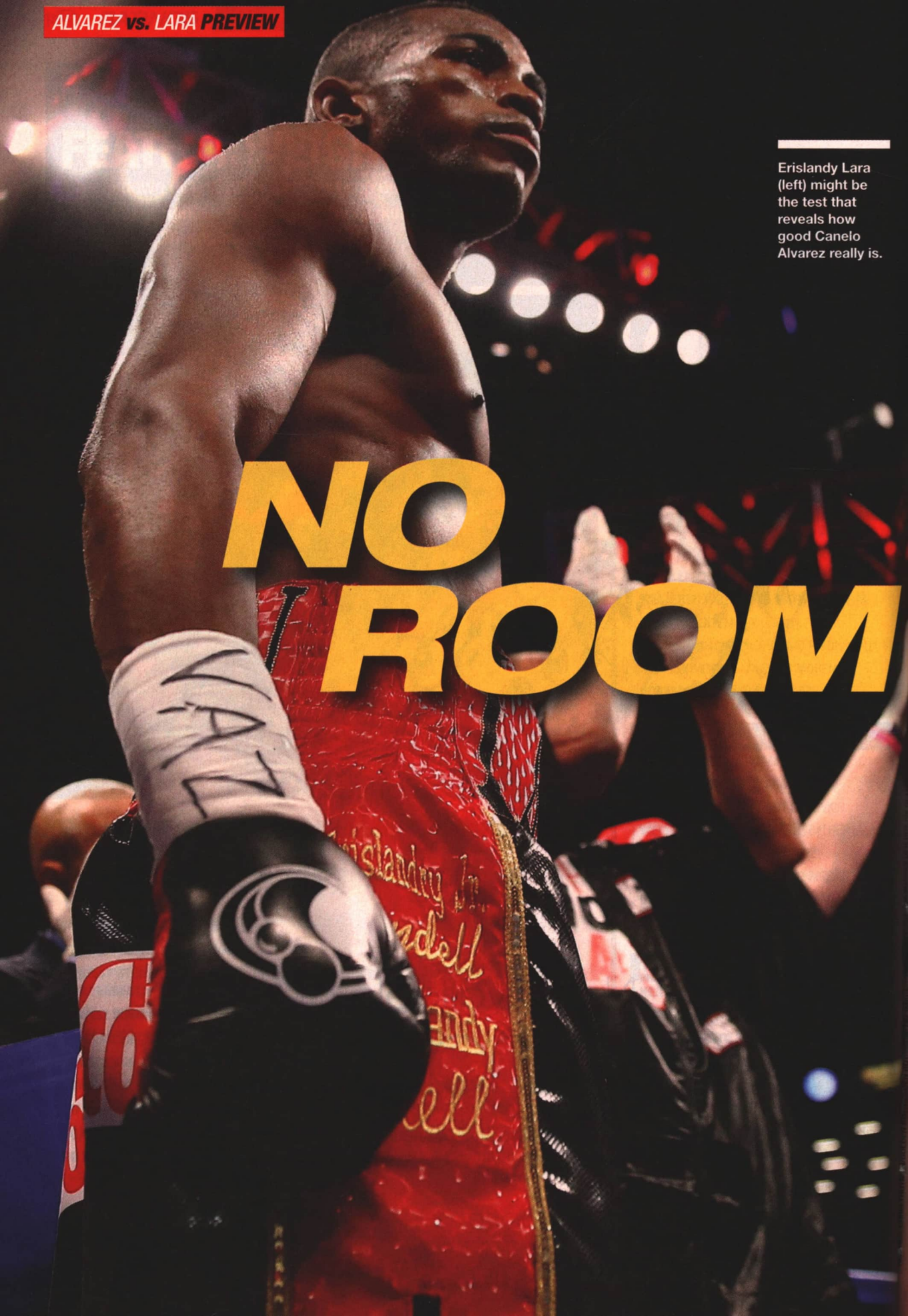


STYLE PU PINK

STYLE PU ORANGE

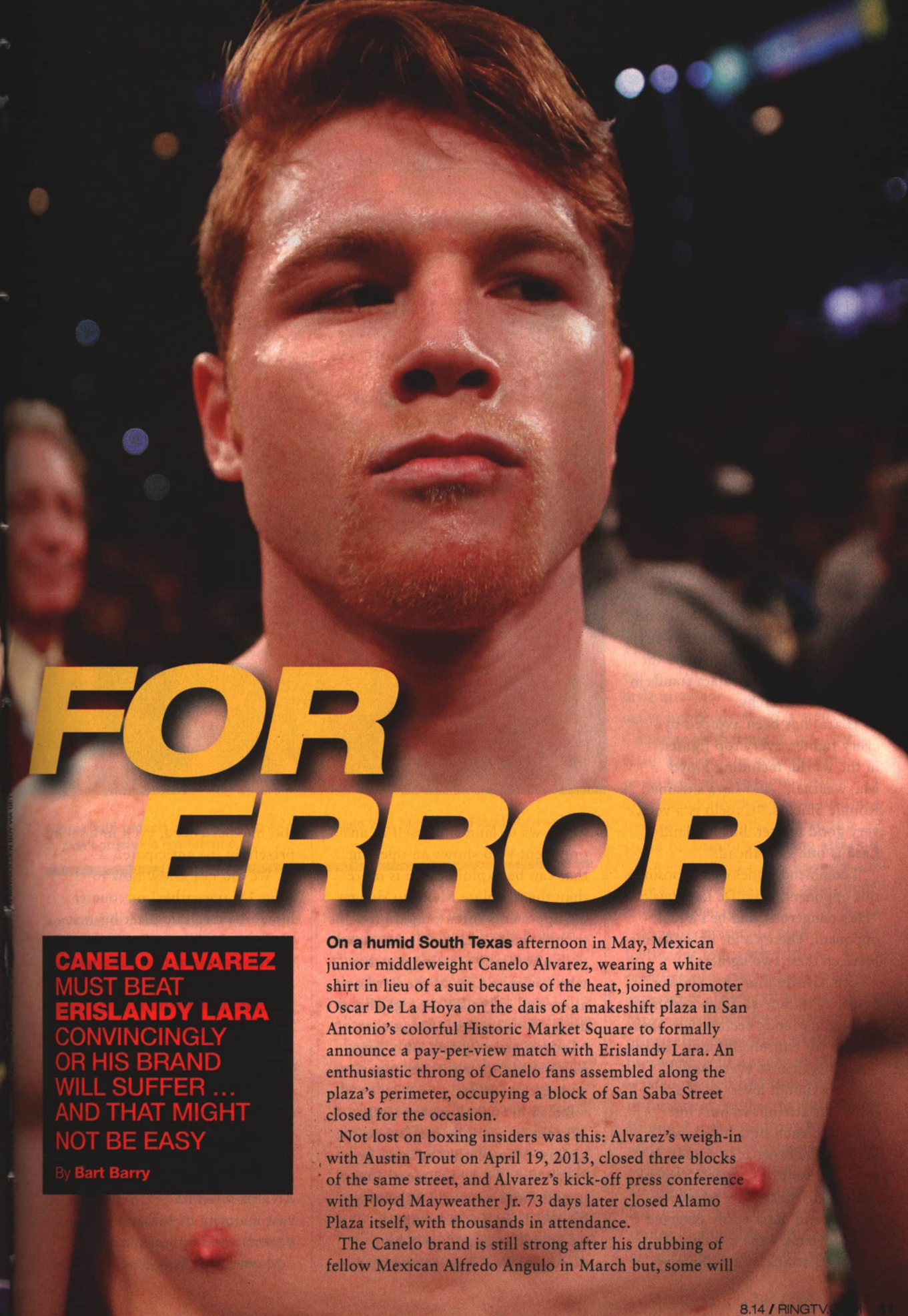
STYLE PU RED

STYLE PU BLUE



Erislandy Lara (left) might be the test that reveals how good Canelo Alvarez really is.

NO ROOM



FOR ERROR

CANELO ALVAREZ MUST BEAT ERISLANDY LARA CONVINCINGLY OR HIS BRAND WILL SUFFER ... AND THAT MIGHT NOT BE EASY

By **Bart Barry**

On a humid South Texas afternoon in May, Mexican junior middleweight Canelo Alvarez, wearing a white shirt in lieu of a suit because of the heat, joined promoter Oscar De La Hoya on the dais of a makeshift plaza in San Antonio's colorful Historic Market Square to formally announce a pay-per-view match with Erislandy Lara. An enthusiastic throng of Canelo fans assembled along the plaza's perimeter, occupying a block of San Saba Street closed for the occasion.

Not lost on boxing insiders was this: Alvarez's weigh-in with Austin Trout on April 19, 2013, closed three blocks of the same street, and Alvarez's kick-off press conference with Floyd Mayweather Jr. 73 days later closed Alamo Plaza itself, with thousands in attendance.

The Canelo brand is still strong after his drubbing of fellow Mexican Alfredo Angulo in March but, some will

Alvarez (left) proved by pummeling Alfredo Angulo that his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. didn't crush his confidence.

argue, it was diminished by his one-sided loss to Mayweather in September. To return his career to its former trajectory, Alvarez will need to defeat Lara decisively on July 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. And very few things happen decisively to Lara in a boxing ring.

The challenger is a talented southpaw who was schooled in Cuba, the amateur hub of the sport for many years. His career has been marked by fits and starts, but he remains one of the most dangerous junior middleweights in the world, one reason few potential opponents have wanted to engage him. Chances are you'll lose. And if you win, you probably won't look good doing it because of his ability to avoid dangerous exchanges of punches.

The fact that Alvarez decided to fight him at such an important juncture in his career says a lot about the Mexican's confidence. Make no mistake: This fight, as much as any other, will help us gauge where the redhead from Guadalajara stands in the sport's hierarchy.

"[Lara] has been avoided by every fighter, every top fighter, in the world, including Floyd Mayweather," said Lara's trainer, Ronnie Shields. "Canelo is a very, very good fighter. But Erislandy Lara is one step ahead."

"I commend Canelo for choosing this opponent," said De La Hoya. "He's dangerous, and he's a real opponent. There's a lot of similarities between these two fighters."

Both Alvarez and Lara show a tendency to fade as fights advance, as middle rounds become late ones, though for entirely different reasons.

Alvarez throws every punch with maximum leverage in a ferocious attempt to hurt his opponent each time his gloves land on the other man's body. It is the element of Canelo's arsenal most easily missed by television viewers and most easily detected from ringside – the ferocity of Alvarez's attack, the willingness he shows to launch himself at any opponent who shows an opening that can be exploited. He is more than the template Mexican slugger his opponents often prepare for, though, more nuanced in his attack than a forward-pressing puncher who commits fully to the left hook alone and only uses the right hand as guard or trigger. Among elite Mexican prizefighters, only Juan Manuel Marquez throws uppercuts with greater effect.

But in his penultimate match, Alvarez was wholly ineffective against Mayweather because he was befuddled by the master's lateral movement and quickness, his proclivity for attacking on an odd beat and switching directions in a way Alvarez was too inexperienced, even in his 43rd prizefight, to anticipate.

"We did not know how to solve [Mayweather] or counter him," Alvarez said after his first professional loss in September. "But what I can say is that his punches are not powerful. They are solely punches to score points."

And score points they did. Mayweather won nine of the 12 rounds on the card of one judge and eight of 12 on that of another, although a third judge (the infamous C.J. Ross) somehow scored it a draw. That debacle aside, for all the pre-fight hype, Alvarez fared no better than the vast majority of Mayweather's overmatched opponents.

Mayweather was generous in his appraisal of his young foe in one regard, saying immediately after his tough fight against Marcos Maidana in May, "Canelo hit harder than Maidana. Canelo hit me with a left hook that I still feel."

Alvarez probably will need to employ a well-rounded attack to get past Lara, whose only loss was a disputed majority decision against Paul Williams in 2011. He also has draws against Carlos Molina and Vanes Martirosyan, the latter fight being stopped early after Martirosyan suffered a cut.

The Cuban has his flaws, though. For example, he has busy feet, not efficient ones. The stronger his opponent, the more likely he is to spring out of punching range with his gloves overhead and circling in a larger circumference than necessary. Against a pressure fighter like Alvarez, that tactic could sap Lara's energy more than it dampens the other man's fighting spirit. Such was the case on June 8 of last year when Lara fought Angulo, a relentless charger who, when he fought Lara at least, did a passable imitation of Alvarez's aggressive style. Angulo was not dissuaded by Lara's wide circles and pot-shotting offense because it became quickly apparent the circles Lara made in their first three rounds were far too wide, far too inefficient for even the best-conditioned athlete to sustain.

"One of the ugliest fights of my life, one of the most difficult," Lara said immediately after his tilt with Angulo. "But I'm very happy, very emotional, because I was able to exploit my gifts to their fullest."

"It's hard to see how it could be done any better than this," opined American boxing writer Kelsey McCarson after investigating the PlexBoxing system Shields uses in conjunction with personal trainer Danny Arnold in Houston. "You can hear people working out together with an almost jubilant exuberance. It sounds more like a celebration than a workout."

Much is made in Texas of the integrated conditioning system devised by Shields and Arnold, and certainly Lara's fitness kept him upright long enough to outlast Angulo in a grueling battle to win by 10th-round knockout. But little attention is given to how many hundreds of extra steps the Cuban took that night in Carson, Calif. Despite the considerable poise Lara showed immediately after being knocked down for the first two times in his career, the stress of Angulo's pressing attack often caused Lara to take three and four steps where one or two might have sufficed.

Angulo exploited Lara's inefficient footwork with relentlessness enabled by his own experience. Years of fighting fellow Mexicans, generally possessed of prizefighting's most efficient footwork, told Angulo so much wasted motion had to lead to errors of judgment, to miscalculation. In Round 4 that very thing happened, and Lara, who enjoyed undeterred access to Angulo's head in the first 10 minutes of their fight, began a left uppercut from his southpaw stance, pulling his right hand off his cheek just before Angulo's left

fist crashed against it. Lara twisted and crumpled in the familiar corkscrew a fighter does after turning into another's punch. He rose, though, fought Angulo off him with accurate counterpunches, and despite being dropped again in Round 9, rendered Angulo unable to continue one round later.

"When he dropped me, it surprised me," Lara said. "He gave me two good shots. But I rose to gain the victory. That is what is important."

Nine months later, in a fight created to prove Alvarez could carry his own pay-per-view broadcast and ensure no repeats of the Mayweather embarrassment, Angulo, game but likely in decline, was trotted onto the blue canvas of the MGM Grand Garden Arena to get beaten up. Both men delivered, with Canelo throwing extraordinarily confident combinations in the opening rounds, including a lead right uppercut – unofficial notification of Angulo's woefully inferior reflexes – and Angulo punching as if his black Everlasts were underwater.

"I cannot believe it, having the opportunity of his life, El Perro wasted it solely with counting punches," tweeted Juan Manuel Marquez, a regular critic of Alvarez's whose comments on Twitter received wide publicity in the Mexican press. "El Perro got in the ring solely to count punches!"

"Let me tell you something, the Angulo that Lara fought was not the same Angulo that fought Canelo. He just wasn't the same guy," Shields said from Puerto Rico, on the last stop of the Alvarez-Lara press tour. "Angulo was just walking around, all defensive, "That was not the Angulo everybody knows."

"Angulo is a warrior," Alvarez said, choosing his words in a measured and predictable way. "He has much heart. I told everyone I could box him and fight him toe-to-toe. I had seen several fights of his. We worked with his style to connect with the punches we connected with."

Alvarez's March effort against Angulo was a rehabilitating exercise reminiscent of his career's earlier showcase matches with hopelessly spent opponents like Argentine Carlos Baldomir and Puerto Rican Kermit Cintron, matches that allowed Canelo to hurl punches fearlessly and burnish his image as a handsome, friendly anomaly still capable of sport's most savage acts between bells.

In the middle of Alvarez's post-Angulo press conference, Lara climbed on the stage and sheepishly approached the podium from which Canelo addressed the media. Given a chance to speak, Lara nervously reasserted his contention that, for beating Angulo in Angulo's most recent fight, he, not Angulo, should have fought Canelo in March. Then Lara said fans were crazy with desire for a fight between the two men.

"Are you all crazy for me to fight with him?" Alvarez said rhetorically before turning to Lara. "That is not how you make a fight. You have to wait your turn."

Lara (left) handled Austin Trout more easily than Alvarez did.

Whether or not the encounter was scripted, Lara did not have to wait long. Within a month, news arrived that Canelo requested Lara for his July 12 opponent at the MGM Grand.

"This is the fight the fans have been asking for," Alvarez said at the kick-off press conference in San Antonio. "I am going to prepare myself for a great victory."

If Alvarez's 10th-round stoppage of Angulo made casual fans forget September's disappointment, what happened two months later, when Maidana relentlessly stalked Mayweather for 36 minutes, reminded them. The one unforgivable part of Alvarez's performance against Mayweather was its tentativeness. Mexican aficionados, and Canelo himself, expected mindless courage from the 23-year-old, but they received uncertainty. In winning only the final round unanimously against Mayweather, long after their fight's decisive point was passed, Alvarez gave a performance that left his head bowed contritely throughout post-fight formalities.

For Mexicans – Mayweather's most reliable viewing demographic and the reason his last seven fights have taken place on Mexican holiday weekends – any Latino fighter able to punch Mayweather is quickly adopted as their own. To see an Argentine respect Mayweather's accomplishments and class only fractionally as much as Canelo had, though, hammering Mayweather at every angle from which Maidana could throw his knuckles, brought ambivalence. There was pride that a fellow Latino had punished Mayweather in a way no one had in a decade at least. There also was retroactive disappointment it had not been their freckled hero instead, particularly if the feat were as possible as Maidana made it look.

Boxing insiders were surprised and impressed Alvarez agreed to face Lara, but Lara's fans were likely most surprised of all. With a difficult southpaw style and a willingness to jog away from other men during fights, Lara has been the perfect spoiler-type fighter for boxing's small but reliable contingent of malcontent fans to embrace. Ascribing every dull moment to skills, and certain every economic consideration made by other titlists proves their fear of exposure, his supporters and handlers have accused every champion within three weight classes of dodging him for years. They crowned him the sport's most avoided – a dubious crown every time a fighter dons it – even after Lara decisioned Austin Trout more definitively in December than Alvarez had 7½ months before.

To call a man who drew with Molina and Martirosyan and was felled twice by Alfredo Angulo someone whom Alvarez might avoid struck Canelo as absurd.

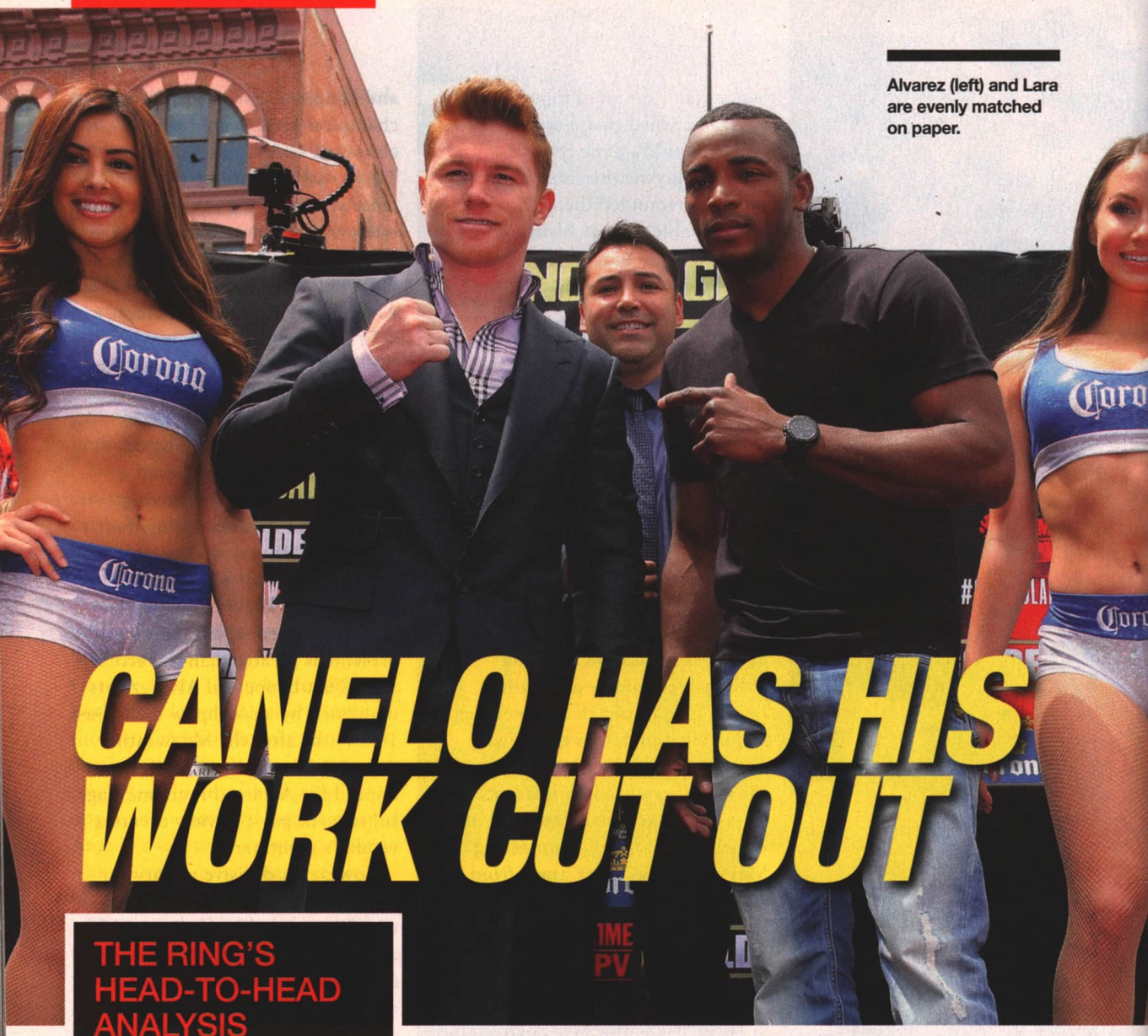
"For him to be saying that he's going to give me a boxing lesson," said Alvarez during their press tour, "is very disrespectful. The reality is that a year ago nobody even knew Lara."

The hypothetical risk Lara presents is greater than the actual one. What happens if Alvarez gets undressed by a southpaw stylist just 10 months after the Mayweather debacle? It would terminally imperil the Alvarez brand, making subsequent pay-per-view events a vendor's nightmare.

However, a decisive victory for Canelo over a boxer-puncher widely respected by boxing insiders as a difficult spoiler, if not an enthralling entertainer, would go a long way toward restoring what credibility Canelo lost in September. It could change the narrative from a made-by-television celebrity to a legitimate young champion who fought an all-time great too early but gained from the ordeal.

"There's nothing more to talk about, the fight is made," said Lara from the San Antonio dais in May. "On July 12, we take Canelo to Cuban boxing school."

If Erislandy Lara fights Alvarez the way he fought Alfredo Angulo, Alvarez will flatten him. If Lara moves wildly and widely from side to side, though, and Alvarez grows discouraged as he did against Mayweather, Mexican aficionados might have to begin a search for their next future of boxing. RING



Alvarez (left) and Lara are evenly matched on paper.

CANELO HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT

THE RING'S HEAD-TO-HEAD ANALYSIS

By **Doug Fischer**

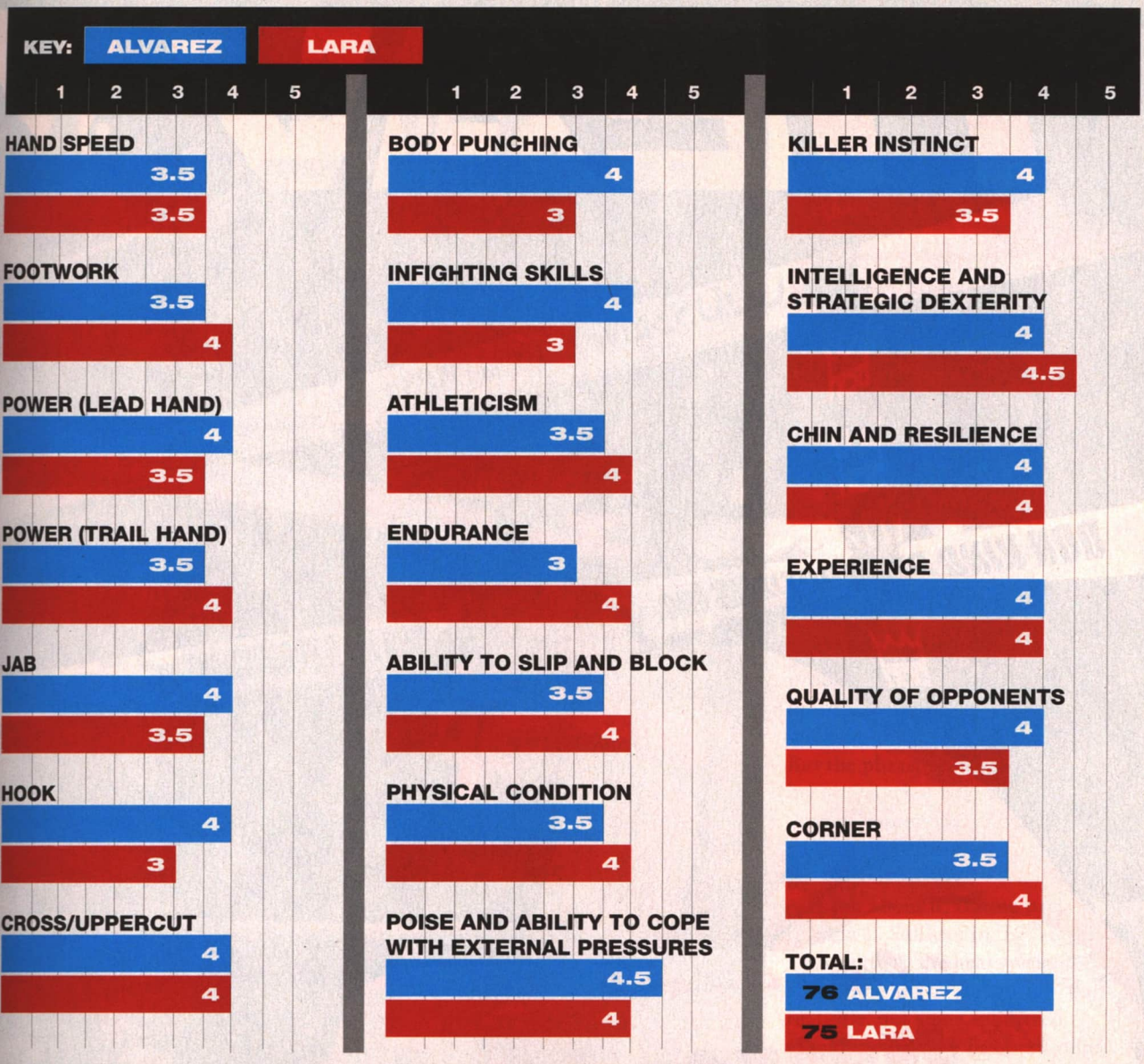
From the moment Canelo Alvarez first turned heads in the U.S. with a six-round KO of former welterweight champ Carlos Baldomir as a prospect in 2010, the freckle-faced Mexican star has had his share of detractors.

Even after winning the WBC 154-pound belt at age 20 (becoming the youngest junior middleweight titleholder ever) and a few successful defenses of the strap, Alvarez was viewed as a protected cash cow – and maybe he was. He won his title by beating Matthew Hatton, a tough but limited welterweight fringe contender, and all the names on his resume were either way past their primes (Baldomir, Shane Mosley, Kermit Cintron), undersized (Alfonzo Gomez, Josesito Lopez) or both (Lovemore Ndou).

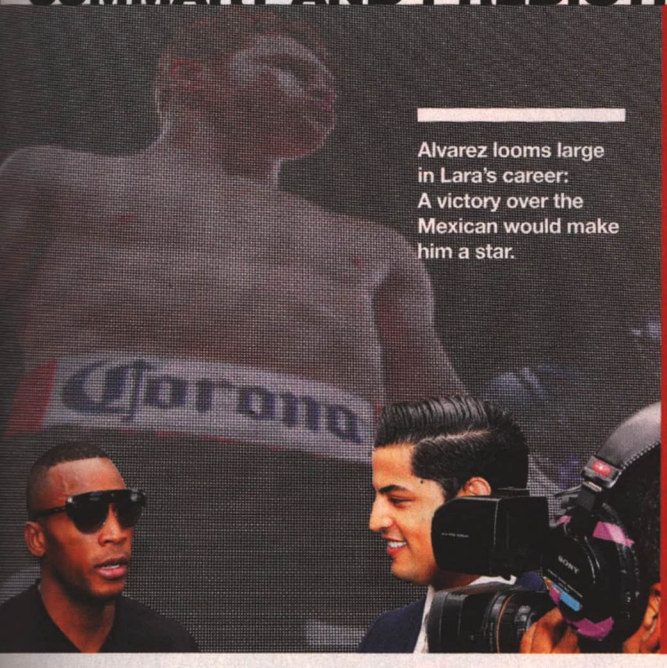
However, even Alvarez's most ardent critics are having a hard time calling him "protected" given his recent schedule. Starting with then-undefeated top 154-pound contender Austin Trout last April, Alvarez has only faced legitimate opponents. He followed his unanimous decision over Trout with a majority-decision loss to pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather Jr. last September and a dominant 10th-round stoppage of veteran slugger Alfredo Angulo in March.

Now he faces another top 154-pound contender in Erislandy Lara, who has also scored a 10th-round TKO of Angulo and unanimous decision over Trout. Many hardcore fans believe the savvy southpaw, who was one of the stars of the celebrated Cuban amateur squad, is a stylistic nightmare for Alvarez. On July 19, we'll see if the former world amateur champ has what it takes to upset the former RING junior middleweight champ.

Here's how Alvarez and Lara match up in 20 categories, both physical and intangible, with each fighter rated on a scale of 0 to 5. (A score of 100 would denote the perfect fighter.)



SUMMARY AND PREDICTION:



Alvarez looms large in Lara's career: A victory over the Mexican would make him a star.

Lara will begin the bout well, using feints, upper-body movement and footwork to keep Alvarez off balance and make the crowd-favorite miss. The Cuban lefty will counter short right hooks and stinging left crosses to take the early rounds, but his success will encourage him to step forward more, which will allow Alvarez to catch him with stiff jabs and counter rights to the chest. Alvarez will be careful not to walk into Lara's traps as the former amateur champ maneuvers about the ring, but the Mexican star will gradually close the distance on his moving opponent in the middle rounds of the bout. Lara will remain dangerous down the stretch of the fight, but once in range, Alvarez will win the majority of exchanges with crisp three- and four-punch combinations that are punctuated with debilitating lefts to the body. A late-round knockdown, courtesy of a left hook, will enable Alvarez to win a close decision in a competitive and entertaining boxing match.

HEAVY WAIT

THE FORTUNES OF U.S. BIG MEN TOOK ANOTHER BLOW WHEN **CHRIS ARREOLA** WAS KO'D BY **BERMANE STIVERNE**. STILL, THERE MIGHT BE REASON FOR OPTIMISM.

By **Bernard Fernandez**

"As the heavyweight division goes, so goes boxing."

That mantra has been recited probably as long as there has been professional boxing, and for long stretches it has been mostly true. But the phrasing is and always has been somewhat incorrect. What its unknown originator no doubt meant was this: "As American heavyweights go, so goes boxing."

Think about it. Dating back to John L. Sullivan in the late 19th century, the heavyweight championship of the world – the real title, not some splintered alphabet version – has been ruled by big men from the United States in much the same way that America once commanded, say, the global economy. Although any best-of list is subjective, the late author and RING Editor Bert Randolph Sugar had 19 American heavyweights among his "100 best fighters of all time," the largest block of entries by both weight class and nationality. And while the numerical placement of certain fighters is open to debate, how could anyone reasonably make a case for excluding such all-time greats as Jack Johnson, Sam Langford, Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, Joe Louis, Ezzard Charles, Rocky Marciano, Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, George Foreman, Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield?

Chris Arreola fell short in his bid to become the first American heavyweight titleholder in seven years.

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

But the last "golden age" of American heavyweights was nearly 20 years ago, when Tyson, Holyfield and Riddick Bowe were fixtures in boxing's top tier along with England's Lennox Lewis. Then a curious thing happened: Tyson, Holyfield and Bowe got old, retired or faded badly. And, for the first time in nearly a century of unbroken American domination, there were no real heirs apparent to take their place. The division's seat of heavyweight power suddenly and dramatically shifted to Eastern Europe, where Ukrainian brothers Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko shared the throne that once was considered to be a virtual American birthright.

And now?

There is a growing sentiment, still small but not as small as it was not so very long ago, that U.S. heavyweight boxing is or soon will experience the sort of revival that could make the division at least relevant on these shores for the first time since Tyson, Holyfield and Bowe were big deals in the ring, at the box office and in the television ratings.

The latest setback to American hopes came on May 10, when Chris Arreola, hoping to become the first heavyweight from the U.S. to hold a major title since Shannon Briggs in 2007, was stopped in six rounds by Bermane Stiverne for the WBC championship vacated by Vitali Klitschko.

That leaves would-be wavers of the dusty American heavyweight banner Deontay Wilder (31-0, 31 KOs), Bryant Jennings (18-0, 10 KOs) and, if you fudge just a bit, Stiverne (24-1-1, 21 KOs). Stiverne – most frequently described as a Haitian-born citizen of Canada – has lived in Las Vegas for 10 years and he has indicated that he has begun or soon will begin the process to become a naturalized citizen of the U.S.

"I'm really proud to bring the belt back to America," he said during an in-ring interview following the ESPN telecast of the bout, which seems to be an indication of his intentions.

For now, Wilder and Jennings will continue to portray themselves to be the best hopes to become the first U.S. heavyweight titleholder since Briggs wrested the WBO strap from Belarus' Sergei Liakhovich on Nov. 4, 2006. Briggs promptly relinquished his belt in his first defense, a unanimous-decision loss to Russia's Sultan Ibragimov.

"I think it's very important [to win a heavyweight title as an American]," said Wilder, who was at ringside for the Stiverne-Arreola rematch at the Galen Center on the campus of the University of Southern California. "The division has been dead because there hasn't been a dominant American heavyweight in a while.

Is unbeaten Bryant Jennings the real deal or just another American mirage?

Yeah, we have the Klitschkos, and no one wants to discredit their work, but they don't bring excitement to the division like we had back in the day. I think I have all the tools – the power, the charisma, the energy – to bring that excitement back."

Jennings, whose WBC eliminator against Cuba-born, Ireland-based Mike Perez scheduled for May 24 was postponed when Perez suffered a shoulder injury in training, echoed many of Wilder's patriotic sentiments.

"I definitely want to bring the title back to America," he said from his training camp in Houston before

the postponement was announced. "I definitely see things picking up. I know they're picking up for me. I've said this before, and I'll say it again: Any fight fans who haven't seen me would like me if they did see me, and that's not as much of an issue as it once was. I am getting more exposure now, which is more than I can say for some of the other good, young American heavyweights who are still waiting for their chance to get noticed."

The message trumpeted by Wilder, Jennings and even Stiverne is a hopeful one, but, still, one has to wonder whether it's just another mirage shimmering in a desert wasteland or an actual oasis to quench the pugilistic thirst of Americans who too often have been sold worthless bills of goods on U.S. heavyweights who failed to live up to expectations.

Since Tyson, Holyfield and Bowe faded from prominence, and even before that to some extent, the notion of widespread American control of the heavyweight division has become outdated. If you put the Big Three in a separate category, there have been six U.S. heavyweights to hold at least a share of the heavyweight title over the past 20 years. They are, in addition to Briggs:

- Oliver McCall, who pulled off a huge upset when he stopped Lennox Lewis for the vacant WBC championship on Sept. 24, 1994, in London. After one successful defense, against an aging Larry Holmes, the "Atomic Bull" was dethroned by England's Frank Bruno. In a rematch with Lewis, again for the vacant WBC crown, he was stopped in five rounds on Feb. 7, 1997.
- Hasim Rahman, in much the same manner that fellow underdog McCall had, connected with a crushing right hand to the jaw to take Lewis' WBC strap on a fifth-round knockout on April 22, 2001, in Carnival City, South Africa. In the rematch on Nov. 17 of that year, Lewis took the championship back on a fourth-round KO.
- Undersized but gutty Chris Byrd caught a break when, trailing badly on the scorecards through nine rounds, WBO heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko didn't come out for the 10th round because of a shoulder injury on April 1, 2000, in Berlin. Byrd lost in his first defense, to Wladimir Klitschko, but later went on to capture the IBF belt on a unanimous decision over Evander Holyfield, and to successfully defend it four times before again losing to Wlad, on a seventh-round stoppage, on April 22, 2006.
- Roy Jones Jr., the undisputed light heavyweight champion, bulked up and gave the much larger and decidedly slower WBA heavyweight titlist John Ruiz a boxing lesson on March 1, 2003, in Las Vegas. Jones soon after relinquished that title to move back down to light heavyweight and never again fought as a heavyweight.
- Longshot Lamon Brewster took home the vacant WBO championship when he stopped Wladimir Klitschko in five rounds on April 10, 2004, in Las Vegas. After successful defenses against Kali Meehan, Andrew Golota and Luan Krasniqi, he was outpointed by Liakhovich on April 1, 2006, in Cleveland.
- Ruiz became the first American Latino to win a major heavyweight title when he outpointed Holyfield to win the WBA belt in 2001. He lost it to Jones but regained it after he outpointed Rahman for the interim title and then Jones vacated the full version in 2004.

Of that group, only Jones is a no-brainer bet for eventual induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, but he'll go in mostly for his work in weight classes other than heavyweight. Byrd, tough and determined, would, at best, be considered a fringe candidate. The others have no chance.

Wilder is right about one thing: It's difficult to discredit the body of work compiled by the brothers Klitschko, who in tandem are 107-5 (93 KOs). In world title fights only, they're 38-4 (30 KOs). Both 6 feet 6 inches or taller and in the 245-pound range, each would be no day at the beach for any heavyweight in any era. They're IBHOF locks.

Now that the 38-year-old Wlad is the only Klitschko still active as a boxer, the familial stranglehold he and Vitali had long had on the division appears to have loosened just a bit. Stiverne's ascendance to the WBC title represents an opening that someone else – Wilder, maybe? Or Jennings? – could also step through as the status quo is reconfigured, as it always must be.

Wilder, as Stiverne's mandatory, is poised to challenge the new champion in the near future, and that figures to be an interesting and competitive matchup. The winner of another WBC eliminator, which would have pitted Jennings against Perez, is slated to get it on with the Stiverne-Wilder survivor. If everything plays out as presently scripted, the WBC portion of the heavyweight picture could get interesting and stay that way well into 2015 and possibly beyond.

But Wladimir Klitschko apparently wants to add the green WBC belt he never pursued because Vitali had it to the THE RING, IBF WBA, and WBO ones he already has in his collection. After Stiverne's stoppage of Arreola, which followed the 12-round decision he scored in their first meeting on April 17, 2013, Wlad sent a congratulatory message to the winner which read: "I hope that the sanctioning bodies will speak the same language and we find a solution to allow me to fight for the WBC

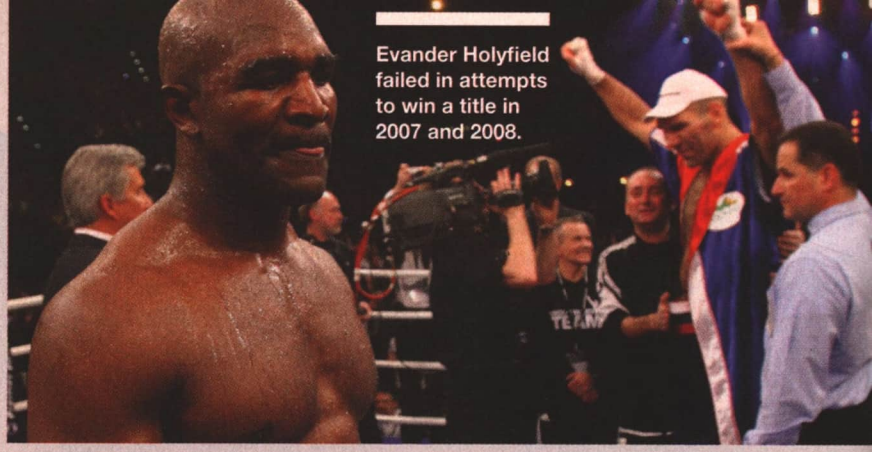
title. ... There are a lot of sanctioning bodies and obligations. I just hope the sanctioning bodies will be supportive of this unification fight."

Wlad could have added that he also wants world peace and for Floyd Mayweather Jr. to fight Manny Pacquiao, which have roughly the same chance of happening. Don King promotes Stiverne, and it's a pretty safe bet that he won't risk the new lead pony in his stable against a heavily favored Klitschko. And even if His Hairness did consent to do so, it's an even safer bet that one or more of those sanctioning bodies Klitschko referred to would initiate a strip job faster than a pole dancer who's just chugged a case of Red Bull.

American fight fans have been down this path before, so they're used to disappointment. During the assorted reigns of the Klitschkos, the U.S. has offered up to them such human sacrifices as Arreola, Tony Thompson, Eddie Chambers, Ray Austin, Calvin Brock, Kevin Johnson, Obed Sullivan and Ed Mahone. Many of the Klitschkos' title fights took place in Europe, off U.S. TV, further contributing to the lessened profile of the division in this country.

For all the problems that have beset American heavyweight boxing, though, there are signs that change finally is in the air. Stiverne-Arreola, which was televised by ESPN, delivered a 0.8 overnight rating according to Nielsen, making it the highest-rated fight on any ESPN network since 2003. That included a boffo 4.1 rating in the New Orleans market, of all places.

More exposure on U.S. television means more opportunities for American heavyweights to shine. That's the good news. The bad news is that Klitschko appears to be nearly invincible, unless he gets old in a hurry. And THE RING's Top 10 ratings in the division, at press time, still include far more Europeans (Bulgaria's Kubrat



Evander Holyfield failed in attempts to win a title in 2007 and 2008.

FUTILITY

Shannon Briggs was the last American to hold a major heavyweight title, winning it in November 2006 and then losing it seven months later in his first defense. Since then, U.S. heavyweights have fought for a championship 13 times and failed 13 times. Here's the sorry list.

CHRIS ARREOLA
Date: May 10, 2014
Opponent: Bermane Stiverne
Title at stake: Vacant WBC
Result: TKO 6

TONY THOMPSON
Date: July 7, 2012
Opponent: Wladimir Klitschko
Title at stake: RING, IBF, WBA, WBO
Result: TKO 6

SHANNON BRIGGS
Date: Oct. 16, 2010
Opponent: Vitali Klitschko
Title at stake: WBC
Result: UD 12

JOHN RUIZ
Date: April 3, 2010
Opponent: David Haye
Title at stake: WBA
Result: TKO 9

EDDIE CHAMBERS
Date: March 20, 2010
Opponent: W. Klitschko
Title at stake: RING, IBF, WBO
Result: KO 12

KEVIN JOHNSON
Date: Dec. 12, 2009
Opponent: V. Klitschko
Title at stake: WBC
Result: UD 12

ARREOLA
Date: Sept. 26, 2009
Opponent: V. Klitschko
Title at stake: WBC
Result: TKO 10

EVANDER HOLYFIELD
Date: Dec. 20, 2008
Opponent: Nikolai Valuev
Title at stake: WBA
Result: MD 12

HASIM RAHMAN
Date: Dec. 13, 2008
Opponent: W. Klitschko
Title at stake: IBF, WBO
Result: TKO 7

RUIZ
Date: Aug. 30, 2008
Opponent: Valuev
Title at stake: Vacant WBA
Result: UD 12

THOMPSON
Date: July 12, 2008
Opponent: W. Klitschko
Title at stake: IBF, WBO
Result: KO 11

HOLYFIELD
Date: Oct. 13, 2007
Opponent: Sultan Ibragimov
Title at stake: WBO
Result: UD 12

LAMON BREWSTER
Date: July 7, 2007
Opponent: W. Klitschko
Title at stake: IBF
Result: TKO 6

Pulev at No. 1, Russia's Alexander Povetkin at 2, England's Tyson Fury at 4, Ukraine's Vyacheslav Glazkov at 5 and Poland's Tomasz Adamek at 6, with Finland's Robert Helenius recently being dropped from the ratings for inactivity) than Americans (Arreola at 7, Wilder at 8, Jennings at 9, Thompson at 10). Other U.S. heavyweights rated by one sanctioning body or another include fighters who no longer can be viewed as rising stars: the 45-year-old Antonio Tarver, 41-year-old Fres Oquendo and 37-year-old Steve Cunningham.

Gary Shaw, who promotes Jennings, thinks – well, at least hopes – that America is inching back into the heavyweight picture on a more substantial basis.

"Lennox Lewis wasn't an American, but he was embraced by the American public because, one, he was really good, and, two, he fought in the United States a lot," Shaw said. "People in this country weren't that concerned with his nationality.

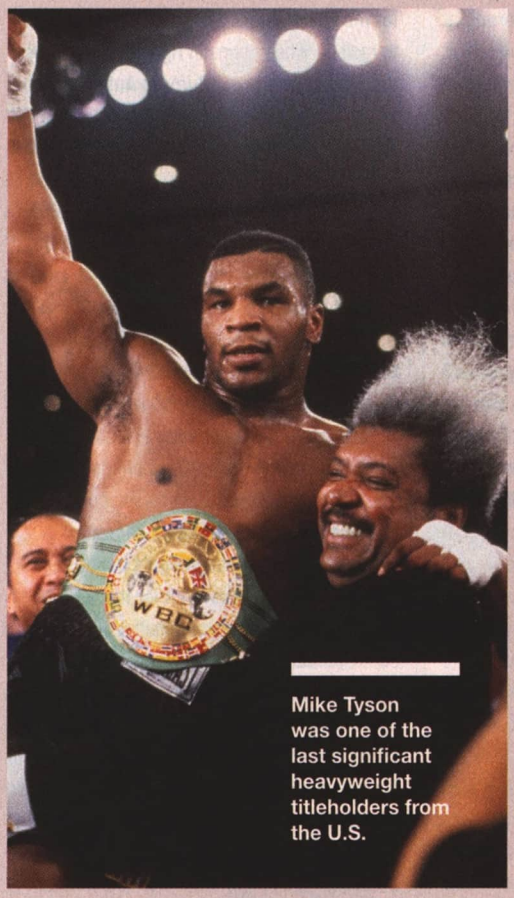
"When Lewis retired, the landscape changed. I think that was the final bell for the heavyweight division in America. The Klitschkos, I think, were thought of more as Russians or Germans or Ukrainians. They weren't embraced here like Lewis was, plus they were fighting primarily in Europe."

Maybe Wilder, with his string of knockouts, will be the guy who gets the division waving the stars and stripes again. Or Jennings, whom Shaw calls the most athletic and personable of the American big men.

"What he needs is to be the next Holyfield, and I think he can be," Shaw said. "He's built like Holyfield. Whenever Evander went into the ring, you knew you were going to see a fight. It's the same thing with Bryant Jennings."

Right about now, America would settle for the next anybody who can drag a little bit of a once-glorious past into a still-uncertain future.

FROM DOMINANT TO AFTERTHOUGHT



Mike Tyson was one of the last significant heavyweight titleholders from the U.S.

THE RING RANKS THE TOP U.S. HEAVYWEIGHTS BY DECADE

By **Martin Mulcahey**

The state of American heavyweights might be at its lowest point since bare-knuckle boxing was transitioning into the gloved era in the 1870s. Gone are the days when larger-than-life legends such as John L. Sullivan, Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali led the way as Americans dominated the sport's glamour division. The shift took place in the 1990s, as the decline of boxing's popularity drove athletic American men who weighed more than 200 pounds toward easier sports like football and basketball. Young heavyweights like Deontay Wilder and Bryant Jennings give Americans hope but, until someone breaks through, this remains the era of European domination.

For the vast majority of the past 120 years, the world heavyweight championship was in American hands. There were plenty of contenders from Europe who made it into the Top 10 through the decades, but only Max Schmeling and Ingemar Johansson legitimately interrupted the U.S. dominance. Then came Lennox Lewis, and nothing was the same for Americans thereafter. A handful of Yanks have won big heavyweight fights and titles over the past 20 years, but they were the exception rather than the rule.

In this feature, THE RING ranks the 10 best American heavyweights by decade, with those who held a major title in bold text. You can see by the names and bold lettering that the Americans' fortunes had changed in the 2000s. They still won some titles, but most reigns were very short.

A few more things to keep in mind:

- You'll notice that fewer names are in bold in the early centuries. That's the case primarily because there was only one recognized heavyweight champ until the 1960s, when myriad sanctioning bodies popped up.
- If given the option of listing one boxer for two decades or allowing entry to a fighter whose achievements were nominally inferior in terms of overall accomplishment, I chose the latter.
- Head-to-head losses could be overcome (the "styles makes fights rule") if one boxer's work in that decade was overwhelming in length of dominance and quantity.
- It was more difficult to rank boxers before the 1950s because many light heavyweights and even middleweights scored significant victories in the heavyweight division. » »

FROM DOMINANT TO AFTERTHOUGHT

1880s

1. John L. Sullivan »
2. James J. Corbett
3. Jake Kilrain
4. Pat Killen
5. Mike Conley
6. Joe McAuliffe
7. Billy Wilson
8. Charles Hadley
9. Jack Ashton
10. Jack Fallon

Non-American titleholders: None

The first American-bred boxing superstar, John L. Sullivan, emerged in this decade even though the sport was in its infancy in the U.S. Sullivan dominated opponents in the ring – "My name is John L. Sullivan and I can lick any sonofabitch in the house" – and then made a living on the vaudeville circuit. His larger-than-life persona set the trend for American heavyweights, who for many years were the biggest heroes and personalities in sports.

1890s

1. James J. Jeffries
2. James J. Corbett
3. Tom Sharkey
4. Joe Choynski
5. Charles "Kid" McCoy
6. Frank Childs
7. Gus Ruhlin
8. Bob Armstrong
9. Joe Butler
10. Ed Dunkhurst

Non-American titleholder: Bob Fitzsimmons (U.K.-New Zealand)

Boxing was still outlawed in many parts of the country during the 1890s but, as a result of rules changes and improved infrastructure, it was evolving into an accepted sport during the reign of popular champion Jim Jeffries. It was also the decade when boxing truly became national, as James Corbett ventured from the West Coast (San Francisco) to beat mainstays in the dominant Eastern corridors of power like New York City and Chicago.

1900s

1. Jack Johnson
2. James J. Jeffries
3. Philadelphia Jack O'Brien
4. Joe Jeannette
5. Marvin Hart
6. Sam McVea
7. Fireman Jim Flynn
8. Gus Ruhlin
9. Al Kaufman
10. Mike Schreck

Non-American titleholder: Tommy Burns (Canada)

The talented and controversial Jack Johnson was forced to travel the world to get his deserved shot at the title, a blessing in disguise since "The Galveston Giant" would probably not have been allowed to compete for the heavyweight title on American soil, due to racism. When Johnson ripped the title from the diminutive Tommy Burns in Australia, it set off the infamous "White Hope" era.

1910s

1. Jack Dempsey »
2. Harry Wills
3. Joe Jeannette
4. Fred Fulton
5. Sam McVea
6. Gunboat Smith
7. Jess Willard
8. Jack Johnson
9. Kid Norfolk
10. Luther McCarty

Non-American titleholders: None

African-American heavyweights might've dominated the decade if not for the shameful "color line," the result of Johnson's controversial reign. Gifted boxers like Harry Wills and Joe Jeannette were denied the opportunity to fight for the world title, even by Johnson, who stood to make more money fighting white opponents. "Jack forgot about his old friends after he became champion and drew the color line against his own people," Jeannette said.

1920s

1. Gene Tunney »
2. Jack Dempsey
3. Harry Wills
4. Jack Sharkey
5. George Godfrey
6. Tommy Gibbons
7. Young Stribling
8. Tommy Loughran
9. Tuffy Griffiths
10. Jim Maloney

Non-American titleholders: None

Standing atop the division were the odd couple of Dempsey and Tunney, their personality types and boxing styles polar opposites. The erudite and refined Tunney held sway in the ring, but over time Dempsey's legend has managed to push Tunney aside in historical terms. It is probably better this way. Dempsey's rags-to-riches and rough-around-the-edges manner is a better representation of the "Roaring Twenties."

1930s

1. Joe Louis »
2. Max Baer
3. Steve Hamas
4. Tommy Loughran
5. King Levinsky
6. Ernie Schaff
7. Johnny Risko
8. Maxie Rosenbloom
9. Lou Nova
10. Bob Pastor

Non-American titleholders: Max Schmeling and Primo Carnera

This was the peak of the sport's popularity in number of boxers (in relation to other sports), boxing venues and available dates. Fans could attend fight cards nearly seven days a week in major cities like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Philadelphia. Boxing rivaled baseball and horse racing in popularity. And globally no sportsman was more famous than the heavyweight champion. Significantly, Joe Louis became a national hero despite the racial divide in America.

1940s

1. Joe Louis
2. Ezzard Charles
3. Jimmy Bivins
4. Jersey Joe Walcott
5. Elmer Ray
6. Archie Moore
7. Joey Maxim
8. Billy Conn
9. Gus Lesnevich
10. Tami Mauriello

Non-American titleholders: None

This was the decade of Joe Louis and of World War II's impact on the sport. Louis made 16 of his record 25 successful title defenses in the 1940s, running roughshod over members of his "Bum of the Month Club." However, everything came to a halt when the greats took aim with a rifle instead of boxing gloves as Americans' attention turned to war. Louis' image and name were used to raise war bonds. He gave hope to the nation when he said, "We're going to do our part, and we'll win because were on God's side."

1950s

1. Rocky Marciano »
2. Floyd Patterson
3. Archie Moore
4. Eddy Machen
5. Zora Folley
6. Jersey Joe Walcott

7. Tommy Jackson
8. Ezzard Charles
9. Clarence Henry
10. Bob Baker
Non-American titleholder: Ingemar Johansson (Sweden)

Light heavyweights could still effectively mix it up with the big boys in the 1950s. Even the dominant champion of the decade, undefeated legend Rocky Marciano, never weighed more than 193 pounds. Like his predecessor, Marciano did a lot to dismantle stereotypes of Italian-Americans. He reportedly cried in Joe Louis' dressing room after stopping his hero in their famous fight.

1960s

1. Muhammad Ali »
2. Sonny Liston
3. Joe Frazier
4. Ernie Terrell
5. Floyd Patterson
6. Zora Folley
7. Eddie Machen
8. Jimmy Ellis
9. Jerry Quarry
10. Mac Foster
Non-American titleholders: Ingemar Johansson (Sweden)

The 1960s were a decade of change. And a new type of champion emerged to challenge old thinking in both social and sporting terms, with a mix of bravado and charisma. The self-confident and talkative Muhammad Ali (who had changed his name from Cassius Clay) became one of the first sportsmen to market himself instead of allowing an image to be created for him. Many have tried to imitate Ali; none have succeeded. Ali fought everyone in the Top 10 except Eddie Machen.

1970s

1. Muhammad Ali
2. George Foreman »
3. Joe Frazier
4. Larry Holmes
5. Ken Norton
6. Jimmy Young
7. Ron Lyle
8. John Tate
9. Earnie Shavers
10. Jerry Quarry
Non-American titleholders: None

This was the golden era of heavyweights, filled with diverse skill sets and a series of unforgettable wars between great or near-great fighters. Ali vs. Frazier, Frazier vs. Foreman, Ali vs. Foreman, Ali vs. Norton … the list goes on and on. Ali became the most famous man on the planet in part because he was the best of the period but also because of his convictions and commanding personality. Ali fought everyone in the Top 10 except John Tate.

1980s

1. Mike Tyson »
2. Larry Holmes
3. Pinklon Thomas
4. Evander Holyfield
5. Tim Witherspoon
6. Mike Weaver
7. Michael Spinks
8. Tony Tucker
9. Tony Tubbs
10. James "Bonecrusher" Smith
Non-American titleholders: Gerrie Coetzee (South Africa), Trevor Berbick (Canada) and Francesco Damiani (Italy)

The decade belonged to two remarkable Hall of Famers, Larry Holmes and then Mike Tyson. Holmes, the underappreciated heir to Muhammad Ali, completed his historic run of 20 successful titles defenses (second only to Joe Louis' 25) before finally losing to Michael Spinks. Tyson became the last heavyweight who even non-sports fans would know because of a string of particularly violent knockouts and bizarre – and ultimately criminal – behavior later on.

1990s

1. Riddick Bowe »
2. Evander Holyfield
3. Mike Tyson
4. George Foreman
5. Michael Moorer
6. Oliver McCall
7. Buster Douglas
8. Larry Holmes
9. Ray Mercer
10. Tommy Morrison
Non-American titleholders: Francesco Damiani (Italy), Lennox Lewis (U.K.), Herbie Hide (U.K.), Frank Bruno (U.K.), Henry Akinwande (U.K.) and Vitali Klitschko (Ukraine)

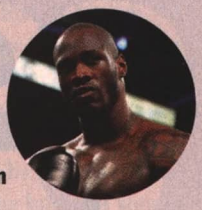
Many people see this as the last quality heavyweight era worldwide. The 1990s heralded the arrival of "super heavyweights," whose size alone won fights. American Oliver McCall managed to KO Lennox Lewis but the Briton exacted revenge and dominated the decade. Mike Tyson lost the championship to Buster Douglas in 1990 but regained two titles late in the decade before biting off a portion of Evander Holyfield's ear. The breakup of the Soviet Union allowed a pipeline of European talent into the heavyweight division, a seismic shift in power that prevails to this day.

2000s

1. Chris Byrd
2. James Toney
3. Hasim Rahman
4. Evander Holyfield
5. John Ruiz
6. Lamon Brewster
7. Jameel McCline
8. Shannon Briggs
9. Eddie Chambers
10. Tony Thompson
Non-American titleholder: Lewis (U.K.), Wladimir Klitschko (Ukraine), Corrie Sanders (South Africa), Vitali Klitschko (Ukraine), Nikolai Valuev (Russia), Sergei Liakovich (Belarus), Oleg Maskaev (Russia), Ruslan Chagaev (Uzbekistan), Sultan Ibragimov (Russia), Samuel Peter (Nigeria) and David Haye (U.K.)

This was the worst full decade of American heavyweight boxing, marked by marginal talent and poor performances. The exception was Chris Byrd, an undersized defensive specialist who scored several upset victories. John Ruiz had two title reigns but never received much respect. The fact Evander Holyfield is No. 4 here even though he was near the end of his effectiveness is an indication of how weak this decade was.

2010s



1. Deontay Wilder »
2. Bryant Jennings
3. Chris Arreola
4. Tony Thompson
5. Steve Cunningham
6. Jonathan Banks
7. Seth Mitchell
8. Dominic Breazeale
9. Amir Mansour
10. Gerald Washington
Non-American titleholders: Davie Haye (U.K.), Wladimir Klitscko (Ukraine), Vitali Klitschko (Ukraine) and Bermane Stiverne (Canada)

This decade is still about the future. American hopefuls Wilder and Jennings display the type of power and intuition that could mask their lack of amateur seasoning when compared to their European counterparts. They are still trading on potential, but we'll know soon whether they will spearhead a new era of American heavyweights or become part of the disturbing trend.

SULLIVAN/DEMPSEY/TUNNEY/LOUIS/MARCIANO/TYSON/BOWE: THE RING MAGAZINE; ALI: DON MORLEY; FOREMAN: AFP; WILDER: ANDREW YATES

CONFLICTING VISIONS

Richard Schaefer (left) and Oscar De La Hoya have been the faces of perhaps the biggest boxing promotional firm in the world.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA AND RICHARD SCHAEFER, WHO RUN GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS, ARE AT A CROSSROADS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP

By **Ron Borges**

Editor's note: Golden Boy Promotions President Oscar De La Hoya and CEO Richard Schaefer were in talks at the time we went to press to determine the future of their professional relationship. To read up-to-date reports about the tumult at Golden Boy, go to http://bitly.com/goldenboyrift.

In boxing it seldom ends with a kiss.

No matter how deep the affection once ran, nearly every relationship ends up in a fight. And so it has come to pass with Golden Boy Promotions' founder (and THE RING owner) Oscar De La Hoya and company CEO Richard Schaefer. Maybe that's the cruel nature of the sport or the corrupting nature of the business, but few relationships survive intact in boxing, whether between fighters and managers, fathers and sons or successful business partners.

Whatever finally happens, De La Hoya made something clear the night of the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Marcos Maidana welterweight title unification fight at a press conference he called at the MGM Grand: While he is retired from the ring, he remains a fighter. He just doesn't want to fight with Schaefer if he doesn't have to.

Schaefer, meanwhile, seemed to be spoiling for a confrontation at that time, like a young challenger pushing for his chance against an old champion he now sees as lax and limited. As the two sparred verbally, it reminded one of the tense scene in the classic 1995 film *Heat* between a cop played by Al Pacino and a gangster he was pursuing, played by Robert De Niro.

As they sat in a restaurant, two things were clear: the respect they shared for each other and the looming confrontation that seemed inevitable and perhaps mutually destructive. Late in the exchange, De Niro's character says, "What if you do got me boxed in and I gotta put you down? Because no matter what, you will not get in my way. We've been face to face, yeah ... but I will not hesitate. Not for a second."

Pacino's character, a sad smile creasing his face, replies: "Maybe that's the way it will be ... or ... who knows?"

Yes, who knows? Schaefer is insisting he will never again work with rival promoter Bob Arum, while De La Hoya met with Arum for 2½ hours the week of the fight. De La Hoya said it was to make amends, a typical result of a 12-step effort at maintaining the sobriety he admits to having lost for several years. But he also suggested a willingness to do future business with Arum, an idea Schaefer finds repulsive.

"Life is too short," Schaefer said. "I will never work with Arum again. It won't happen. Oscar has a different vision for the company than I do. His vision is something I've tried many times, which is to make peace with Bob Arum. I tried it so many times, and I gave up. I just don't appreciate being treated that way, being called names, being disrespected and basically, at the turn of a light switch, you think the next day everything is fine. Maybe it's part of the rehab program, the point in the rehab where you have to forgive everybody. I can appreciate that. I can understand that. I don't have a problem ... if they want to make peace and make up, but to start doing business with him again, that's just not who I am.

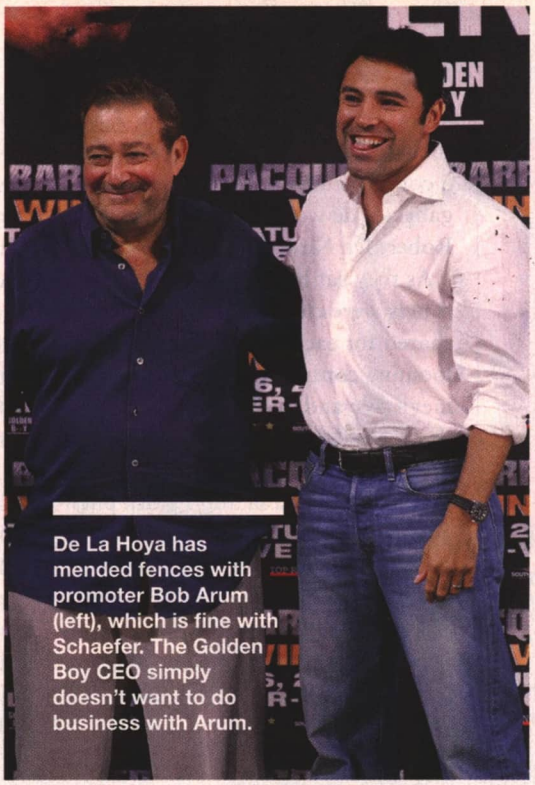
"My entire life is built on relationships, and I've done very well with that. Loyalty really means something in my book, and I'm going to continue with that. Whether that's going to be with Golden Boy or without Golden Boy, I can't tell you. I'm not really worried about whether my [next] chapter is going to be with Golden Boy or without Golden Boy. I started Golden Boy from nothing and made it the No. 1 boxing promoter. I came here in 1988 and joined Swiss Bancorp and later UBS when [it had] no private bank. When I left, it was the largest private bank in the world. If you reach for the stars, you get them. I believe in hard work and dedication, just like Floyd does. I built Golden Boy from nothing. So we'll see.

"Oscar and me, whether you say make or made, a great team and have had great success. Sometimes you have issues, which we did a few years ago, and you work them out. Sometimes you don't. I have nothing negative to say about Oscar. I think we've done a lot together. This is not about Oscar. Sometimes you have a different vision about what you want to do with the business, and it's not all about the Bob Arum thing. If I work somewhere and I'm the CEO, the C stands for Chief. If I work somewhere, I have a vision of how to build a business and how to continue to grow the business. If that vision is different ... when the CEO and the major shareholder have a different vision as to how the business should go, then you part ways. That doesn't mean it's going to be a nasty split. It's a difference of opinion, and everybody moves on."

One can see both sides of this. On the one hand, Schaefer surely grew to resent De La Hoya's long absences and the problems and public embarrassments his addictions caused. Over time it was clear he was running the company with little input from De La Hoya for long stretches, a circumstance it would be only human nature to grow weary of. Now De La Hoya is back and healthy and wants to reassert

himself. Skepticism on Schaefer's part is understandable.

On the other side, for all Schaefer has done to build Golden Boy, there is only one Golden Boy and that is De La Hoya. Without him, Schaefer would not have been able to build Golden Boy Promotions into the giant it has become. It was De La Hoya and De La Hoya alone who bled to create and finance the company. It was the power of the brand he created with his fists and his charisma that brought in advertisers and rekindled interest in a sport that had fallen upon hard times. So for him to want a say in how things are run going forward is as understandable as Schaefer's troubles with that idea.



De La Hoya has mended fences with promoter Bob Arum (left), which is fine with Schaefer. The Golden Boy CEO simply doesn't want to do business with Arum.

Schaefer has been adamant that as CEO he runs Golden Boy's day-to-day operation, not De La Hoya, who he dismissively called "the president" a number of times. That is De La Hoya's title, and both sides conceded the CEO ranks above him. But Schaefer admits De La Hoya could fire him at any time, an act De La Hoya insisted he wanted to avoid.

"First of all, nobody is going to dismiss Richard," De La Hoya said. "Richard is not getting fired. I don't want him to leave. No one is telling him to leave. We've been letting lawyers handle this situation. ... I feel when our lives are exposed or business is exposed through the media, it's getting out of hand. I have a choice of taking it personally or not taking it personally, dealing with it like it's a business or dealing with it like it's not a business. What would I rather do? I'd rather sit down with Richard and just talk to him, just like I did with Bob. I can sit down with Richard and say, 'What's the problem here? Can we work something out? What's going on?' Lay all the cards on the table. Is that going to happen? I would like [it] to. Absolutely."

As De La Hoya was speaking at the podium at his press conference, Schaefer was in the arena saying he understood why De La Hoya might need to make amends with Arum but added, "He could have used those 2½ hours promoting the fight."

Somehow one doubts those 2½ hours would have made a material difference, but that is not the point. It's reflective of how off the rails their relationship had become in the years Schaefer was running the company while De La Hoya, by his own admittance, was running amok.

"The bottom line is I was not around," De La Hoya said. "I got caught up in stuff. I was down and out. I really was. I decided to get back up."

During that time, for reasons yet to be explained, a number of Golden Boy's best fighters turned out not to be under promotional contract but rather signed to managerial deals with boxing's most powerful manager, Al Haymon. Schaefer admits the two are friends. That revelation generated speculation of a conspiracy to buy out De La Hoya or walk and form a new company backed by a multitude of fighters built at Golden Boy's expense.

Time will tell if that's the case or just another ill-founded rumor. But when asked about his company's circumstances, De La Hoya admitted he did not know for sure how many fighters he had under contract but thought it was "quite a few."

When asked if he was surprised to learn so many of the biggest names, excluding Canelo Alvarez, were not signed to his company, he said, "Was I surprised? Absolutely! Of course. ... That has nothing to do with Al. I have a CEO of a company that's supposed to be looking out for my interests.

"Facts are the facts," he continued. "I like Richard. There are a few things we're not agreeing on. Nothing that can't be worked out. He's the CEO of the company. He helped me build my career. I'm grateful for that, but this company is ... named Golden Boy for a reason. ... I fought in the ring, and it was just me. Outside the ring I have a team, a whole team. The way I found Richard many years ago from the banking world and asked him if he could come along and help me out and we could start Golden Boy Promotions, the way I did that, I can do it again. That is no problem for me. ... I have my plans. Nobody can stop me from doing that, I assure you."

Schaefer seemed to feel the same way. He insisted he'd done a good job turning Golden Boy into boxing's largest promotional company, and no one would dispute that. But can it move forward when such a clear power struggle exists?

It didn't work at Apple, where Steve Jobs founded the company, was forced out by stockholders and later was brought back to save it. Is that De La Hoya's fate or Schaefer's? Can Golden Boy survive if its highest-profile fighters walk to enter a new venture with Haymon? Would Schaefer walk with them?

Hard to say, but one thing is clear: Like De Niro in Heat, if either side feels boxed in, they will not hesitate. The question is to do what? RING

ON THE BOOKSHELF

A LOOK AT COMPELLING WORKS

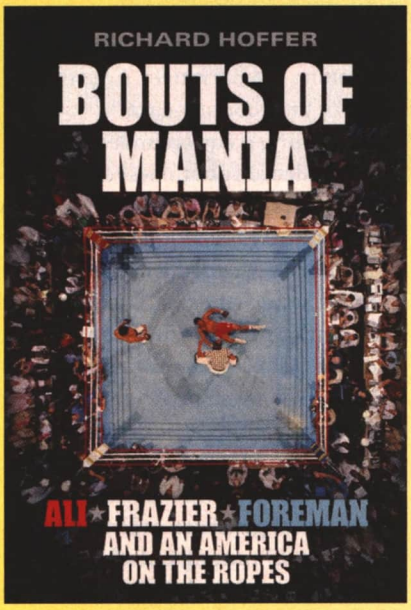
HEAVYWEIGHT BONFIRE

Bouts Of Mania **brings back the burning drama of the historic fights involving Ali, Frazier and Foreman**

By **Thomas Hauser**

Bouts of Mania, by Richard Hoffer, is keyed to five fights that are part of boxing lore: Ali-Frazier I, II and III; Frazier-Foreman I; and Ali-Foreman. It's not a full recounting of the fighters' careers. Rather, it places these five fights in historical context and recreates certain scenes and moments that define the fights and the fighters themselves.

Three men, five fights, 51 rounds contested on four continents over 55 months.



In the end, Hoffer concedes, "the narrative would always belong to Ali." Madison Square Garden, Zaire and Manila are now synonymous with historic fights. Jamaica (where Frazier and Foreman battled for the first time) isn't.

Still, Hoffer is on firm ground when he writes, "Pick [any] one [of the three] and he might have dominated boxing during a period when the game still mattered. He might have dominated the sports and celebrity culture that was then taking full bloom all on his own. But put them together? Three powerful and contrasting personalities, each a proxy for competing belief systems, each a highly visible (if not always willing) symbol for divided constituencies, and set them in pursuit of a single prize? The urgency, the sheer desperation of these men, produced a period of tumult never before seen, never seen again. Thrillas, Rumbles,

Author Richard Hoffer puts the five-fight series involving Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman in historical context.

Fights of the Century. A world sat ringside and gaped at their effort and determination (and nonsense, also) and wondered at these new and astounding levels of resolve. Somebody could get off a stool after that? Somebody could endure this and return for more? Wait, there's a trilogy in this madness?"

Boxing's most famous wars of attrition began with Ali-Frazier I at Madison Square Garden. That was when, in Hoffer's words, "Ali's hate crimes against Frazier" began.

"Ali," Hoffer writes, "was as much a poster boy for self-importance as he'd been a countercultural icon. But he was an accessible symbol for the revolution." As for Frazier, Hoffer observes, "The idea that, just because Ali stood for something he must also, baffled Frazier. When did he pick sides? He'd never talked politics, race, or religion. How did he get involved in a national debate?"

Insofar as Frazier was concerned, boxing was a fistfight between two men, nothing more and nothing less. It was "a straightforward activity, an honest acceptance of give-and-take. Frazier's frightening advantage," Hoffer contends, "was that he didn't particularly care how much he needed to take in order to give."

Frazier prevailed in Ali-Frazier I. Two years later, he journeyed to Jamaica to defend his throne against George Foreman. Foreman wasn't looking forward to the prospect of combat against an adversary who was "like a boulder with a head."

"I want to be champ," George told himself. "But I don't want to fight him."

But as Hoffer notes, "Few events have the same capacity for surprise as a boxing match. Long-held values vacated, a bias corrected, the surety of opinion canceled, a whole foundation of belief swallowed up in an instant. All in the time in takes a man to swing his arm."

Foreman knocked Frazier out in the second round. That relegated Ali-Frazier II (the least memorable of Hoffer's five fights) to regional-belt status. Then the fires began to rage brightly again.

Reflecting on Jamaica's status as the host for Frazier-Foreman I, Hoffer posits, "The fight crowd didn't particularly care where it was. It was a movable mob, circulating here and there, reconvening at assigned sites, resuming old narratives. Location was of little consequence."

But Zaire, a nation under the boot of President Mobutu Sese Seko? The Philippines, ruled with an iron fist by Ferdinand Marcos?

"Once, he divided a country," Hoffer writes of Ali. "Now he united the world. Ali had gone from the country's most famous draft dodger to its greatest export."

But that led to moral ambiguities because, in Hoffer's words, "there wasn't another man in the world who could generate occasions for such useful propaganda." Ali had become "a symbol of independence that might be rented out and used to create new story lines for ambitious nations."

And then Hoffer asks the question, "Had Ali, whose physical and moral courage was a beacon through a dark and gloomy time, become nothing more than a hired hand, a troubadour of whatever politics paid the most, an advertisement of martial law?"

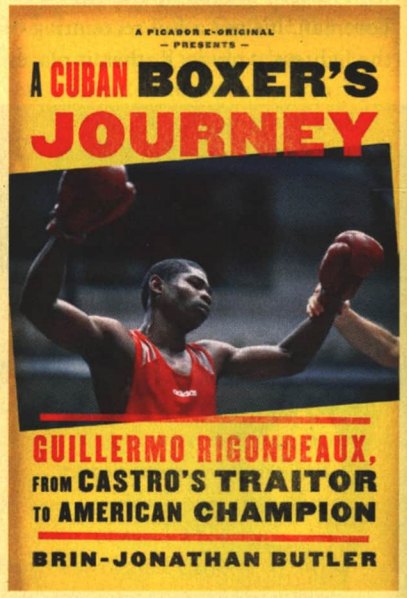
Still, those thoughts were far from the collective consciousness of boxing fans when Ali and Frazier met in Manila. One of the strengths of Hoffer's writing is that the fight action itself is told with insight and drama.

Of Manila, Hoffer proclaims, "The fourteenth round – and it would be the last one, the final three minutes of their shared agony – was a kind of scientific experiment, an investigation into the extremes of human behavior. Just exactly what was a person capable of? How far could he go? How deep could he reach? Nobody had ever seen it conducted at this level, precautionary measures usually in place that would abort any further research, saving the subjects somewhere just short of death. So to that extent, nobody really knew what desire and pride could accomplish, or destroy. Now they did."

The final chapters of Hoffer's work bring the narrative up to the present. Of the three warriors, it's Foreman who is healthy, wealthy, and, even prior to Frazier's death, seemed to enjoy the happiest post-ring years.

"Foreman alone among his blood brothers," Hoffer observes, "got out alive." As for Ali and Frazier, "that's what happens when pride and ambition become so inflamed that survival is no longer a part of the game plan. Take a look, if you can."

"They made a bonfire of themselves," Hoffer concludes. "The embers, after all this time, still smolder away." ★



MAN ADRIFT

A new book about Guillermo Rigondeaux depicts a boxer shunned on both sides of the Florida Straits

By Brian Harty

In 2007, author Brin-Jonathan Butler crossed the Florida straits in search of Cuba's most famous outcast. The result is a fascinating chronicle – *A Cuban Boxer's Journey: The*

Author Brin-Jonathan Butler writes that Guillermo Rigondeaux has had a rough time before and after leaving Cuba.

Guillermo Rigondeaux Story, from Castro's Traitor to American Champion (Picador, New York).

Rigondeaux was a national hero before that year. He'd won two Olympic boxing gold medals and was expected to be the first man to win four. His extraordinary amateur career included 475 fights with only 12 losses, and he occupied a place in the pantheon alongside deities like Teofilo Stevenson and Felix Savon. Like them, however, Rigondeaux was forbidden to leave Cuba and earn money as a pro.

Everything changed with a failed attempt to defect in 2007. Fidel Castro personally branded Rigondeaux a traitor, and it became perilous even to be seen talking to him. Butler describes mistaking the diminutive fighter for a lonely child when they first met and how people spoke of him in whispers to avoid being overheard by informers.

In 2009, Rigondeaux tried again. He left his family behind, hid in the hold of a speedboat racing to Mexico and this time succeeded. His professional career in the U.S. began.

Butler followed Rigondeaux to Mexico at the height of the drug wars in 2010, to Ireland in 2011 (where Butler bet his last $1,000 on a first-round KO after all his camera gear was stolen – and won), to the upset win over Nonito Donaire in 2013. All the while, public contempt grew for Rigondeaux's overly technical style.

The book is not a drawn-out fight report, however. Nor is it an overbearing treatise on U.S.-Cuba relations, though Butler provides the necessary political backdrop. Instead, it's an attempt to peek behind the things we always hear about Cuban boxers to see whether there are some real people back there.

Savon and the late Stevenson are surrounded by the mystique of turning down millions of dollars. They did it, they said, because the choice between having everything but family in the U.S. and having nothing but family in Cuba was a no-brainer.

Their stories are lamented by boxing aficionados as daylight heists from the International Boxing Hall of Fame and cherished by Cuba's loyalists as heroic "eff you's" to America. Butler accepts the validity of both viewpoints but adopts neither as absolute truth, instead reserving his sympathy for the humans caught in between. He approaches these men with the respect appropriate to boxing royalty, but in seeking to know them, he lifts the gold-embroidered robes to reveal a throne riddled with wormholes. In heartbreaking detail, the book recounts what turned out to be Stevenson's last interview, which Butler bought with $130 and a bottle of vodka. Savon and and two-time gold medalist Hector Vinent fare better with the consequence of their choices, but even their burdens are betrayed by the fees they charge under the table for their time.

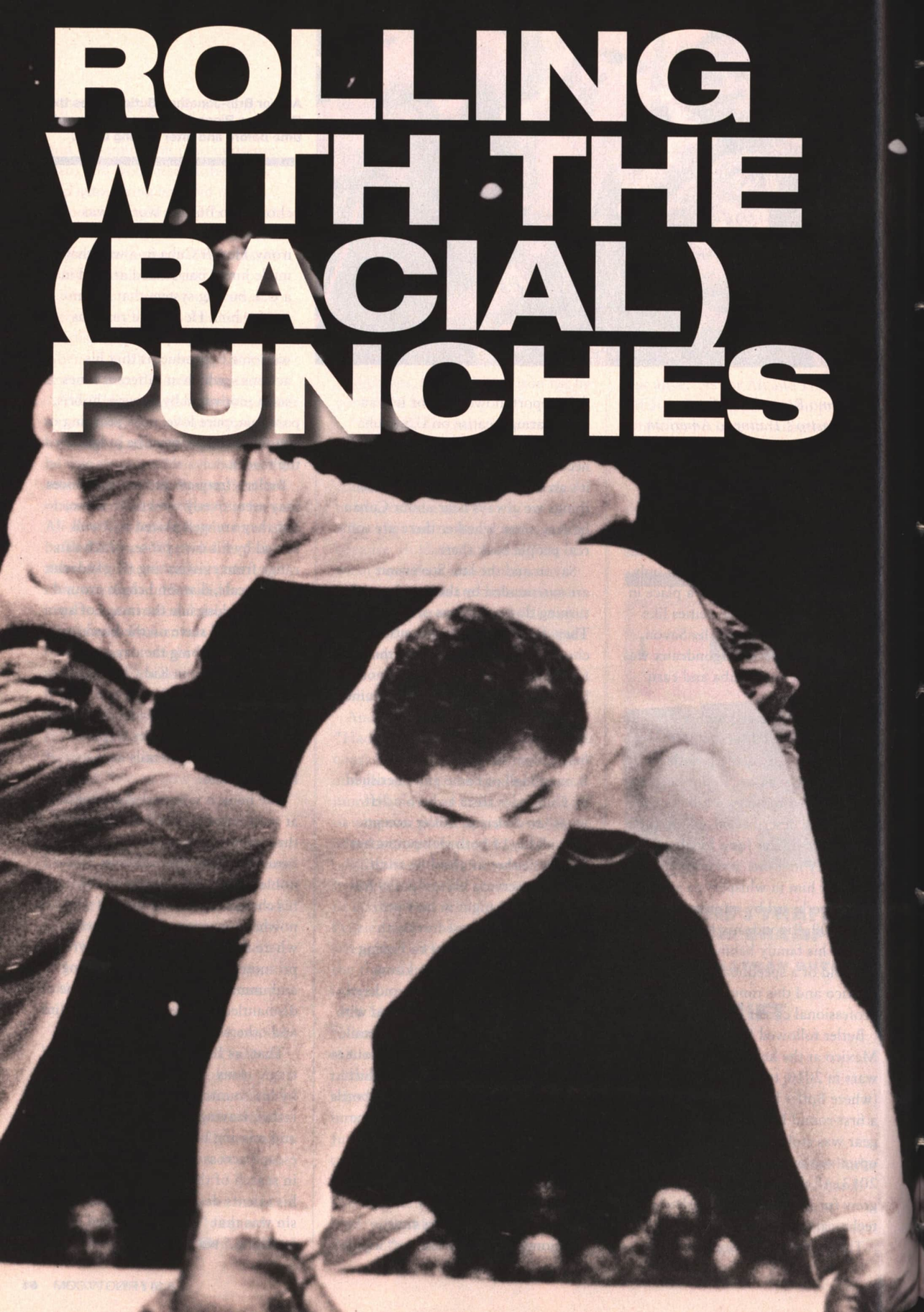
Rigondeaux's response to "Sophie's choice," in Butler's words, was perfectly timed for maximum irony. He left Cuba in a way that made him a pariah and arrived in a U.S. boxing system that had no use for him. He himself remains frustratingly opaque, but the welcome byproduct is that his actions – which at different times seem motivated by naivete, hubris, paranoia, pure love, pure yearning or simply poverty – must be judged by the reader.

Butler's frequent literary references may seem overly esoteric to some, but they are well placed and well served by his own prose, which can range from eviscerating (Rigondeaux on the scale, diamond chain around his neck, alongside the image of an iron-collared slave on the block) to elegant (describing the day he met Savon at a fight in Kid Chocolate Arena) to amusing (any scene with Irish manager Gary Hyde). He also has a storyteller's ability to place these humanizing details into a bigger picture.

The book is a remarkable look at an isolated nation's dilemmas through the ordeals of one isolated boxer. For whatever reasons, noble or not, Rigondeaux made his choices. He found himself nowhere, marooned in a country where the fans, and even his own promoter, dismissed him as boring and unmarketable, even though he dismantled a juggernaut like Donaire and others before him.

That, as Butler shows, is the final tragic irony: After being shunned by his country, disowned by his father, leaving his wife and children, and missing his mother's funeral to escape across shark-infested waters in search of the rewards he believed his talents deserved, Rigondeaux's sin was that "he hadn't risked anything."

ROLLING WITH THE (RACIAL) PUNCHES

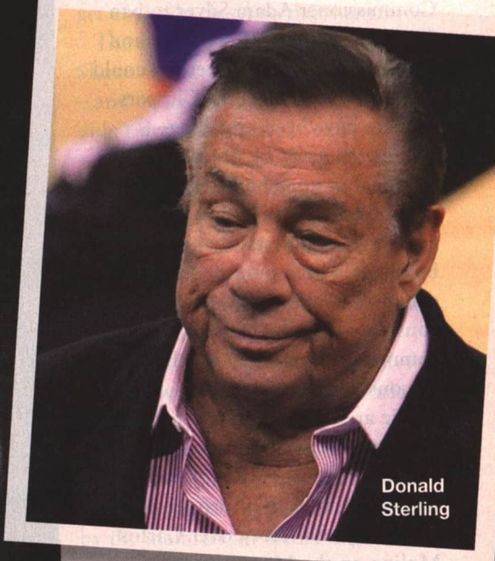


Joe Louis (pictured stopping Max Schmeling) was beloved by the vast majority of Americans even in an intolerant time.

THE RING MAGAZINE

BOXING HAS HAD ITS SHARE OF DONALD STERLING-LIKE COMMENTS BUT NONE HAVE CAUSED AN UPROAR

By **Tim Smith**



Donald Sterling

George Foreman was walking down the street in Los Angeles one day as heavyweight champion when he heard someone call him the N-word.

"I chased the guy down and threw him down on the street and I was about to hit him, and it was Richard Pryor," Foreman said, laughing. "Walking down the street in L.A., I got called the N-word. But in boxing I've never been called anything. Maybe I've just never heard it. Sometimes a giant can't hear a small person."

Foreman related the story in response to a question about the impact of race in boxing and why some of the racially tinged statements people in boxing make don't raise as much public outrage as comments like the ones attributed to Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling. »

Someone leaked a private conversation between Sterling and a female acquaintance to TMZ, the celebrity gossip website, in which the 80-year-old businessman said he didn't want her to be seen in public with African-American men. The resulting firestorm prompted NBA Commissioner Adam Silver to ban Sterling from the NBA for life and fine him $2.5 million. Sterling could also be forced to sell the Clippers.

There have been appalling statements made by people in boxing, but none have resulted in the type of mass outrage that Sterling generated, and certainly no one in boxing has been punished to that extent. And among those who are considered boxing insiders, tasteless comments about ethnicity that might be considered racist by the general public are laughed off and often shrugged off as business as usual.

Some Mexicans were offended by comments Adrien Broner made following his victory over Carlos Molina on the Mayweather-Maidana undercard, after which the World Boxing Council suspended him. But no matter what the WBC does or what Broner says, no one expects people to stop watching Broner's fights.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. went on a 10-minute racist and homophobic rant against Manny Pacquiao on Ustream in 2010. The mainstream media noticed, but there was no mass outrage. Mayweather remains the face of boxing and one of the wealthiest athletes in the world.

Oscar De La Hoya once felt it was necessary to say after a nasty breakup with promoter Bob Arum that he "defeated one of the biggest Jews to come out of Harvard." De La Hoya apologized and the incident never had much of an impact on how he was perceived.

Arum compared Mayweather to Adolf Hitler with the way that Mayweather has negotiated over a proposed match against Pacquiao.

"This is like a tactic – I'm not equating the politics. It's like Hitler," Arum said. "Before the Second World War, 'give me Czechoslovakia, there'll be peace,' and this and that … and [U.K. Prime Minister Neville] Chamberlain kept appeasing, kept appeasing … was there ever going to be peace? No. No. It's not going to get anybody closer to that fight."

The comment was reported on SI.com – *Sports Illustrated's* website – and other boxing websites. But it didn't draw public ire.

"I'm amazed that one of the Jewish groups didn't come down on him for saying that and to trivialize the Holocaust in that manner. To use a phrase like that is beyond contempt," said Mike Silver, a boxing historian and author of the book *The Arc of Boxing: The Rise and Fall of the Sweet Science* (McFarland Publishing, 2009).

"Boxing is a fringe sport, and that shows how far under the radar it is."

A lack of mass appeal and coverage by the mainstream media might account for offensive comments in boxing escaping notice by the general public. But also there is the history of pitting one ethnic group against another in the sport, which has fostered a lax attitude toward insensitive comments by the participants. And there is the "wink and nod" side of the sport that allows certain ugly racial comments in the name of promotion.

None of that makes it right, but it is tolerated inside the sport and hardly noticed outside of it. Foreman said if it's a boxer insulting another boxer, most of the time it is settled in the ring. He said boxers, regardless of their ethnicity, generally don't harbor racist views of each other because most come from the same hardscrabble backgrounds and they respect how difficult it is to be successful in the sport.

That also seems to apply to homosexuality. When Orlando Cruz announced in 2012 that he is gay, few seemed to care. He was just another fighter.

Adrien Broner was suspended by the WBC for a demeaning comment about Mexicans, but no one expects it to affect his career.

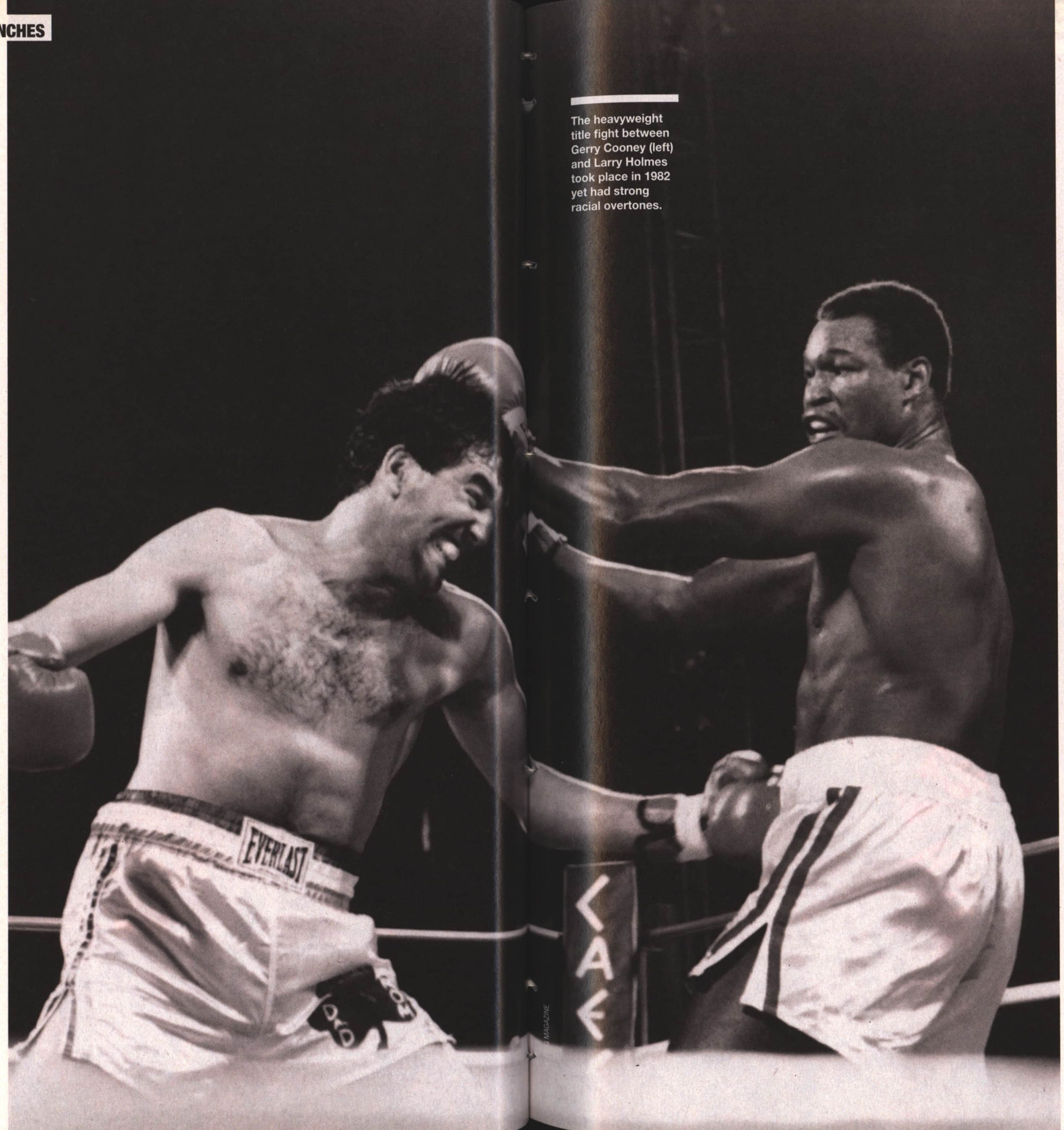
Foreman won a gold medal for the U.S. boxing team at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, where American track athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised black-gloved fists on the medals award stand during the national anthem as a protest against racial inequality in the U.S. He said he realizes that racism remains an undercurrent in American society. But Foreman said race in boxing has always been something the sport traded on and that those who participated in the sport understand that.

'YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, RIGHT AWAY FROM THE BEGINNING BOXING HAS BEEN AN ETHNIC SPORT.'
– MIKE SILVER, AUTHOR

"In the sport, originally to promote it, you had to create something that didn't exist," Foreman said. "You see people in New York and there could be somebody from Italy running a store, someone from Africa stocking the store and someone from Ireland protecting the store. A promoter like Doc Kearns would try to get these people together out of the store and into the seats for boxing."

Promoters in the early 20th century like Kearns and Tex Rickard would promote along racial lines. Name calling and derogatory comments sold tickets.

"You have to understand, right away from the beginning boxing has been an ethnic sport," Silver said. "That's the focus of the sport. You can go back to the greatest fight that took place in England in 1810 when Tom Molineaux (a former American slave) came over to England to fight Jack Burrows. Boxing is driven by ethnicity more than any other sport that you can name."



The heavyweight title fight between Gerry Cooney (left) and Larry Holmes took place in 1982 yet had strong racial overtones.

At the turn of the 20th century boxers like Jack Johnson, Joe Gans and George Dixon were subjected to the same racial prejudices as other blacks in American society. In boxing their race was exploited for financial gain. The promoters of the day created ugly situations by stirring racial hatred and searching for the "Great White Hope" to put bottoms in the seats for matches against black boxers. Silver said the boxing business was capitalism in the rawest, most exploitative form.

There was Joe Louis being nicknamed the "Brown Bomber" and Max Baer wearing the Star of David on his trunks even though he was raised Catholic. It even trickled down to heavyweight Gerry Cooney being promoted as a modern day "Great White Hope" before his match against Larry Holmes.

The result has been a permissive attitude toward racial slights and insults in the sport. Even the fans seem to overlook it to this day. No one can remember a protest organized by fans against anything said by someone in boxing.

"Awful comments went by without anyone caring," Silver said. "The thing that's very important to understand is boxing has never had a national commissioner like baseball and football. If Bob Arum said something like Donald Sterling said, there is no commission to say, 'We're fining you $2 million and we're banning you from the sport.' Arum just says, 'Screw you. I'll do what I want.' And the fighters would still come to him and people will still buy tickets to the fights. It's the same thing with Don King."

Foreman said people often say stupid things like Sterling did, and they pay for it one way or the other. In boxing, the price just isn't very high. And he doesn't expect that to change any time soon.

"Ignorance has existed since the beginning of time," he said, "and it's not one of those things you can breed out of people."

ALI AND FRIEND

JIMMY ELLIS WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED FIGHTER BUT WAS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH MUHAMMAD ALI

By **Thomas Hauser**

Jimmy Ellis was a good fighter and an honest man who had the dubious distinction of being one of boxing's first "alphabet soup" champions.

Ellis turned pro as a middleweight in 1961 and worked his way up the ladder despite losing decisions to Holly Mims, Henry Hank, Rubin Carter, Don Fullmer and George Benton. By 1967, he was a heavyweight. Then Muhammad Ali was stripped of his title for refusing induction into the United States Army, which paved the way for Ellis' participation in a World Boxing Association elimination tournament.

Victories over Leotis Martin, Oscar Bonavena and Jerry Quarry followed. Ellis was now a beltholder, but there was no way the public would accept him as a champion. Any doubt on that score was put to rest on Feb. 16, 1970, when Joe Frazier (who had emerged as "New York State World Heavyweight Champion") unified the belts by stopping Ellis in four rounds.

Ellis retired from boxing in

ROLLS PRESS/POPPERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES

The late Jimmy Ellis (left) was no match for Muhammad Ali when they fought in 1971.

1975 with a record of 40-12-1 (24 knockouts). His final years were spent in a hellish dementia, the result of Alzheimer's disease. He died at 74 on May 6 in a Louisville, Kentucky, hospital.

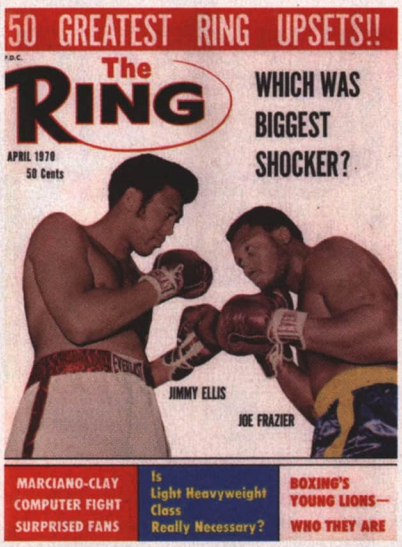
History will remember him best for his relationship with Muhammad Ali. Growing up in Louisville, Ellis and Ali (then known as Cassius Clay) were friends.

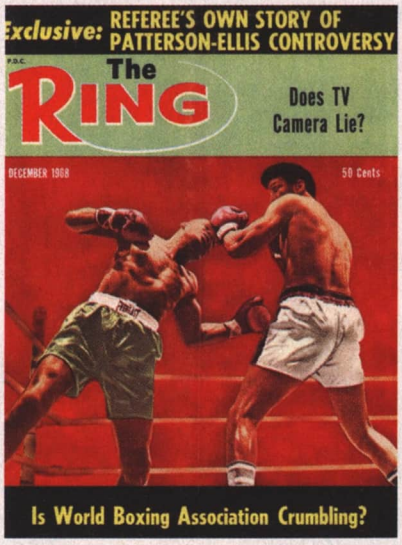
"When I met Ali," Ellis later recalled, "he was 14. I saw him fight on television against a friend of mine, and he beat my friend. I said, 'I can beat this guy,' so I started going to the gym. That's what got me into boxing. We fought twice against each other in the amateurs. I was older by two years, but he was bigger than me even then. The first time we fought, he won. It was close, but he got the decision. It was the first time I ever got beat in a fight. Then we fought again. It was close and I won. I knew it was a good guy that beat me the first time, and it didn't bother me. And I think he figured the second time it was a good guy that beat him.

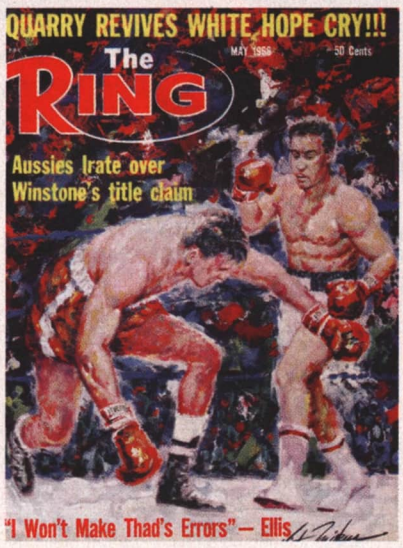
"After that," Ellis continued, "we became friends. Boxing is that way. You can run together, talk together and wind up fighting each other the next night. But when the fight is over, you shake hands and be friends. And I can tell you, Ali spent all his time in the gym. That's where he lived. He wanted to box, and he wanted to be great, and that's what his life was all about. I never saw him fight in the streets. I never saw him pushing or shoving outside the ring. But in the gym, he took his boxing very seriously. Even then, he did a lot of talking, telling guys they couldn't beat him, saying he was gonna knock everyone out. But he was working at it constantly and had the desire to fight. I mean, he was a fighter. Even when he was young, he had a fighting heart."

Later, Ellis became Ali's chief sparring partner.

"When he left home to work







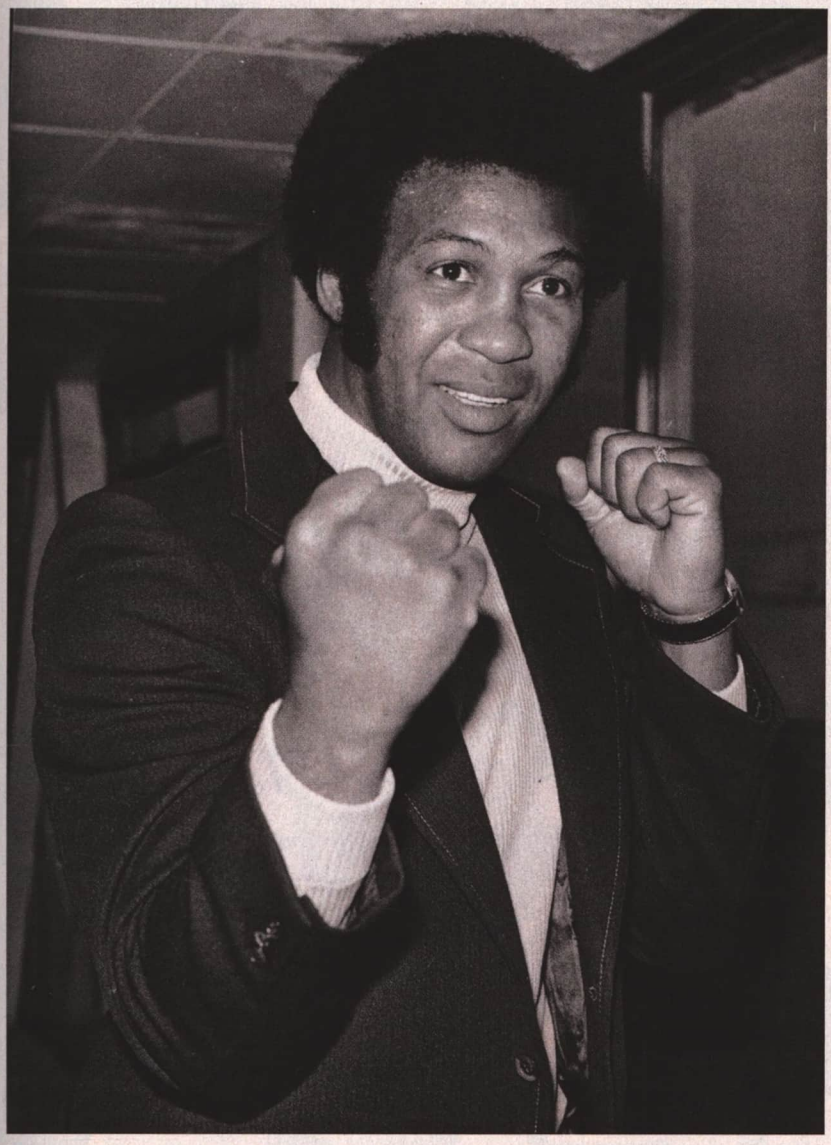
Ellis' prominence during his era is evident in multiple RING covers.

with Angelo Dundee," Ellis said, "I stayed in Louisville. Then I realized I couldn't get anywhere boxing in Louisville, and Ali brought me to Miami. He introduced me to Angelo, helped me meet different people and encouraged me to build my career. We started sparring together before he fought Henry Cooper the first time, and stayed together pretty much until the layoff. And sparring, we were good for each other. He knew I always gave my best, and he knew he always had to defend himself, because if he didn't, I'd tag him. I made him work, he made me work, and we got better together. Then they took his title away. That's when I won the tournament for the WBA championship, and he wasn't angry or anything like that. He was happy for me that I won it."

It was all but inevitable that Ellis and Ali would meet in the ring "for real" someday. That moment came in the Houston Astrodome on July 26, 1971. It was Ali's first fight after losing to Joe Frazier in the historic "Fight of the Century."

Two decades later, Ellis said, "Fighting Ali was strange after the good times between us. I thought I could beat him. We'd sparred a thousand rounds together, and I knew him good. There was nothing he could do to me that I hadn't seen before. I figured I had the style and speed to do what had to be done, and his legs weren't the same anymore. It was a fair fight, and he won. The shot I looked for all night long was the one that got me. He came over my jab with a right hand. I was looking for it. I'd gotten away from it all night. But in the end, that was what I got hit with. He knocked me out in the 12th round.

"Afterward, there wasn't any bitterness between us," Ellis continued. "I shook his hand and said, 'Hey, you got me.' I still love and respect the man. Whatever he did, it came from the heart. He always treated me the way I wanted



Ellis outpointed Jerry Quarry in 1968 to win the title that became vacant when Ali was stripped of the belt.

to be treated. I'm a Baptist. And no matter what was going on in his life, he never let religion come between us. From time to time, he talked to me about Islam. But I knew what I wanted to be, and he never pushed me to join his religion. Once, some of the guys in training camp pressured me about it. But Ali told them, 'Jimmy is my friend, and that's it. Whatever he wants to do is his business.'

"The way I feel about Ali," Ellis said in closing, "he could call me any time of the day or night, I don't care where he'd be, and I'd be there for him. People worry now about his health. But there's a God. And it don't matter if his name is Jehovah or Allah. You can call him anything you want. God will look after Ali."

Now Ali will pray for Jimmy Ellis. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Reflections: Conversations, Essays, and Other Writings*) was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press.

ALI'S STATEMENT

Muhammad Ali released the following statement through The Muhammad Ali Center following the death of Jimmy Ellis.

"Lonnie and I are very saddened by the loss of our friend, and fellow Louisvillian, Jimmy Ellis. Our friendship began on the local Louisville boxing show 'Tomorrow's Champions' and continued to grow throughout the years. In the ring he was tough. In the world of heavyweights, I have always thought that Jimmy was one of the best.

"As a former champion, Jimmy was known for exceptional hand speed and a strong chin. He was a master in the ring. Jimmy and I were both trained by Angelo Dundee, who would often say that Jimmy 'packed more punch' than he was ever given credit for. Strong chin and punching power aside, it was his gentle manner and the compassion in his heart that I found most worthy of admiration.

"I had a kinship with Jimmy and felt like he and I were of the same cloth. He was a great athlete and a caring man. Great competitors who happen to be great friends are rare. Jimmy Ellis was that to me and I will miss him." ★

Marcos Maidana (left) and Floyd Mayweather Jr. both thought they did enough to win on May 3.

GUT CHECK

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. HAD TO DIG DEEP TO FEND OFF A SURPRISINGLY TOUGH CHALLENGE FROM **MARCOS MAIDANA**

By **Ron Borges**

Three days before Marcos Maidana was to square off with Floyd Mayweather Jr., he stood at a podium inside the MGM Grand in Las Vegas heaping praise on Mayweather as if he was introducing him at his eventual Hall of Fame induction ceremony. He spoke of his speed, his skill and his "difficulty." Then, right in the midst of his homage, Maidana turned and told Mayweather what he really thought.

"I don't give a f--- about him!"

ED MULHOLLAND/GOLDEN BOY/GOLDEN BOY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Maidana said before giving a thumbs up to his rabid supporters inside the Hollywood Theatre as he headed back to his seat. Three nights later, on May 3, he would fight Mayweather with the same attitude.

Maidana would still become Mayweather's 45th victim (in 46 victories), losing a lustily booed majority decision, but for the first time since he'd faced Jose Luis Castillo 12 years earlier, it wasn't easy money for "Money" Mayweather. Perhaps then it was more than a coincidence that he chose a circus theme – complete with a ringmaster and juggling act – to lead him into the ring, because before the night was out he would have to become a lion tamer inside it to survive the boldly inartistic Maidana's bludgeoning assaults.

From the opening bell, Maidana chose to defend his WBA portion of the 147-pound title by jamming Mayweather against the ropes and assaulting him. He threw 100 punches in the first round alone, trapping the WBC champion on the ropes and refusing to let him escape, then nailing him with wild overhand rights to the head and often behind it while digging hard body shots to his ribs, hips and, at least four times in the course of the night, to areas clearly south of that.

Mayweather may be the best boxer in the world, but Maidana forced him to fight in a way unfamiliar to him. He was taken to the street by a man coming after him with the voraciousness of a boll weevil in the first half of what became an often brutally inelegant confrontation until Mayweather finally came to understand the rhythm of the engagement. Only then, after the fight moved into its second half, did he find the place he needed to be – the center of the ring.

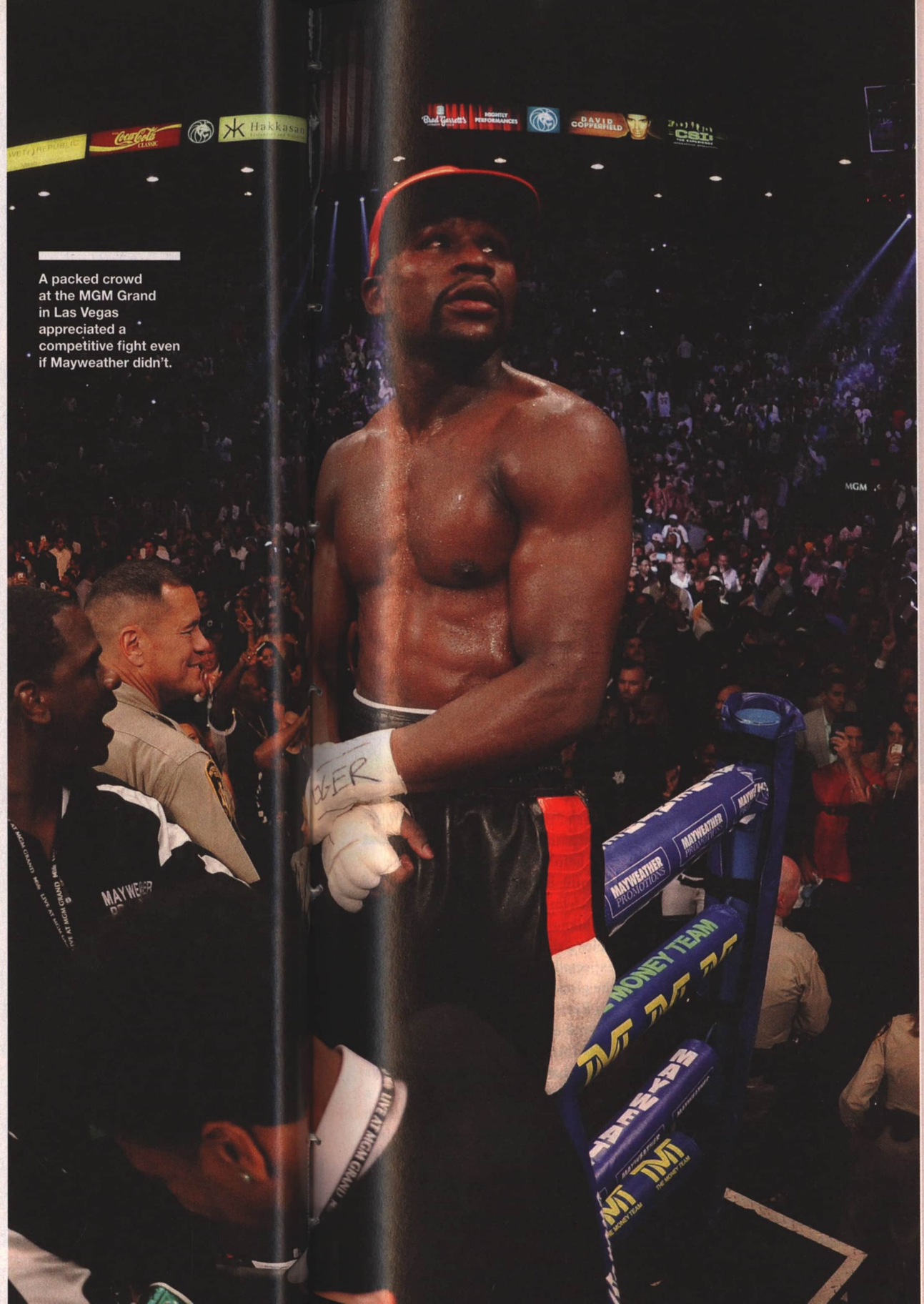
"Finally I was in a competitive fight," Mayweather (46-0, 26 KOs) admitted after it was over. "He had an awkward style, but a true champion can make adjustments to anything ... they survive and they adjust."

That may have been the most glorious outcome for Maidana short of having his hand raised, which he believes he deserved. He made Mayweather think, he made him sweat and most of all he made him bleed. Early on, Maidana time and again pushed or drove him to the ropes and penetrated his previously impregnable defense, landing more punches (221) on him than anyone had in the previous 38 Mayweather fights CompuBox had tallied. Then, in the fourth round, an accidental head butt caused a cut above Mayweather's right eye, and he did not react well to it.

Momentarily distressed at the sight of his own blood and temporarily blinded by it, Mayweather repeatedly pawed and wiped at it with his glove as blood dripped into his eye. Soon after his nose was bleeding as well, yet none of that seemed to assuage Maidana's appetite for mayhem.

What did was Mayweather's admirable mid-course corrections. They were the kind great fighters or great fighter pilots, which is really the same thing, can make in the midst of being assaulted. By the seventh round of Mayweather's second consecutive majority decision victory, he began landing crisp lead rights and solid counter shots over what became a lazy Maidana jab. But most importantly he more and more often found his way back to a safe haven – the middle of the ring.

Maidana was a different fighter when out in space. There the disparity between Mayweather's speed and agility left the Argentine brawler adrift, a stevedore trapped inside a ballet studio. Once Mayweather found his safe harbor, he was able to dictate how the rest of the night would go. That reversal didn't totally convince the crowd of 16,268, who expected to see another coronation and nearly witnessed a decapitation. Many of them sided more with judge Michael Pernick,



A packed crowd at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas appreciated a competitive fight even if Mayweather didn't.

CLOSE CALLS

Floyd Mayweather Jr. hasn't been involved in many close fights. These five are the closest of 10- or 12-round fights that went the distance, based on the difference in overall points for Mayweather and his opponents.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

May 5, 2007, Las Vegas
Result: SD 12
Point differential: 4 (344-340)
Scores (Mayweather's on left): 116-112, 115-113 and 113-115
Note: Most observers believe that Mayweather scored a fairly clear victory in a competitive fight.

JOSE LUIS CASTILLO II

Dec. 7, 2002, Las Vegas
Result: UD 12
Point differential: 7 (346-339)
Scores: 115-113, 116-113 and 115-113
Note: The scores were tighter in the rematch, but everyone who saw both meetings knows the first was more competitive.

CANELO ALVAREZ

Sept. 14, 2013, Las Vegas
Result: MD 12
Point differential: 10 (347-337)
Scores: 116-112, 114-114 and 117-111
Note: C.J. Ross' 114-114 card was horrible, making what was actually a one-sided fight into a close one on the cards.

MARCOS MAIDANA

May 3, 2014, Las Vegas
Result: MD 12
Point differential: 10 (347-337)
Scores: 116-112, 117-111 and 114-114
Note: This probably was Mayweather's closest fight since his first meeting with Castillo in spite of overall points.

JOSE LUIS CASTILLO I

April 20, 2002
Result: UD 12
Point differential: 13 (346-333)
Scores: 116-111, 115-111 and 115-111
Note: Mayweather benefited from questionable scoring in this fight. Many knowledgeable people believe Castillo won.

Mayweather (right) was part ringmaster and part warrior in his victory over Maidana.

who saw it a draw (114-114), and television analyst Paulie Malignaggi, who scored the fight a one point win for Mayweather but conceded the margin was razor-thin and could have gone the other way. The opinions of judges Burt Clements (117-111) and Dave Moretti (116-112) were correct, however.

"It was a tough, competitive fight," conceded Mayweather, who earned a guaranteed $32 million the hard way while Maidana's guaranteed purse was a relatively paltry $1.5 million. "I normally like to go out there and box and move, but he put pressure on me. I wanted to give the fans what they wanted to see, so I stood there and fought him. He's a good fighter, I take nothing away from him."

It was a fiction that Mayweather remained trapped against the ropes solely by choice. Others had tried to put him in that position, but Mayweather's youth and speed allowed him to spin out and counter. But, at 37, the legs that were once his hallmark moved more lethargically, and his once GPS-like accuracy was off a touch. He missed punches wildly more than a few times, something few longtime ringside observers could remember seeing and, more importantly, a sign that his timing was off. Whether that was a result of Maidana's unorthodox and somewhat unattractive style or the first sign that age was finally catching up with Mayweather remains to be seen. But Maidana was somehow able to cut off the ring repeatedly, and after gaining nearly 20 pounds in the 36 hours between the weigh-in and the fight, was simply too strong for Mayweather to push away.

Maidana threw more than twice as many punches as Mayweather (858-426) but Mayweather was far more accurate, landing 54 percent (230), according to CompuBox. Maidana connected on only 26 percent. Mayweather also landed flusher shots, which impress judges who often seem not to realize that being clubbed by an axe handle, though inelegant, is as effective as being speared by an épée.

Mayweather's body, both above and below the belt, paid a steep price for facing Maidana, and so did the MGM. As the crowd filed out of the arena toward the casino, a stampede triggered by the false notion of gunshots resulted in 24 people being rushed to the hospital and over 60 others injured.

Considering the violent nature of Maidana's assault, it was easy to understand why everyone in the arena was on edge by the end. And neither Mayweather's second-half rally nor the judges' opinions convinced Maidana (35-4, 31 KOs) that he had not pulled off the upset of the year after the odds on him tumbled from nearly 12-1 the day before the fight to 6-1 by the opening bell.

"I definitely think I won," Maidana said through a translator. "Floyd did not fight like a man like I expected him to do. I had to change the gloves (after Mayweather alleged his Everlasts had insufficient padding around the knuckles).

"If I would have had my gloves I would have knocked him out. They took away my advantage, and I still gave him a great fight. He did dominate some rounds, but the majority I dominated."

Certainly Maidana dominated the early rounds with a ceaseless body attack that had little regard for boxing's recognized DMZ. He hit Mayweather low and on the hips, an old-school approach to slowing a faster man that has been a part of boxing since the first fighter figured out the Marquess of Queensbury rules are a relative thing once the fight starts.

He also struck Mayweather behind the head a number of times, although frankly some of that was a result of Mayweather trying to duck low. You reap what you sow in that circumstance. Referee Tony Weeks certainly seemed to take a hands-off approach to it all. He not only did little to reprimand Maidana for his tactics but also didn't prevent Mayweather from pushing Maidana's head down and thrusting his elbows under his chin. Weeks chose instead to become a liberal-minded ringmaster under a very unruly big top, deciding this would be a circus where the fighters would decide how far each would go and what they would do to counter the other's tactics.

"If I was Floyd, I wouldn't fight him again," Floyd Mayweather Sr., Mayweatehr's chief trainer, told Hustleboss.com several days after the fight. "It was a superb fighter against an MMA fighter. He hit him in the balls. He hit him on the hip. He hit him with his head. Butted his eye. Maidana don't deserve a rematch."

Don't tell that to Maidana. Once the fight was over and his opponent's hand was raised, Maidana wore a disgusted but not defeated sneer on his face before saying he had his own point of view on a rematch.

"I'm the one that has to give the rematch because I won the fight," Maidana said. "Yes, I'll give him a rematch. I'm not scared of him."

Clearly not. He had in fact done to Mayweather exactly what he'd promised leading up to the fight when he made clear his battle plan would not be like that of Canelo Alvarez, who was lured into making the odd choice of trying to outbox the best boxer in the world.

Maidana comes from a different world view, one typified by the tattoo he has plastered to the left side of his body. It extends from the top of his ribcage downward until it disappears below his waistline. It is a tattoo of a Magnum revolver, one of the most powerful handguns in the world.

It is more than a tattoo, however. It is a warning about how he looks at the fistic life, and perhaps life in general.

"I'm going to make this a street fight," he promised. "Mayweather has never been in a street fight. Robert Garcia, my trainer in the United States, has been a big help to me. He made corrections. Now I have to fight Mayweather with all my tools, just like the way he fights: a little bit dirty but very intelligently. He has fought many great fighters. I don't know how hard they punched him, but on May 3 I am going to check him."

Indeed he did. Although Maidana never landed the kind of flush combination that might buckle Mayweather's knees, he battered him until Mayweather reworked the paradigm and started blitzing him with stiff, straight shots that began to take the play away from Maidana.

Once he lured him into the

The light shone on Mayweather once again after he did battle.

center of the canvas, Mayweather began to paint a torturous picture on Maidana's face, snapping his head back a number of times and tattooing him with punches that stopped Maidana's forward motion and seemed to blunt his previously wild-eyed attack mode.

Mayweather even got the better of Maidana along the ropes with superior defense and escapability, finding ways to keep the fight where his speed and skills allowed him to carry the action. Maidana seemed to tire after Mayweather began to land more heavily, leading Garcia to urge him after the eighth round not to let Mayweather back into the fight by taking rounds off. Maidana nodded, and a new assault began the next round.

What went on in the second half of the fight had as little to do with Maidana giving in, however, as the first half had to do with Mayweather choosing the ropes. In both cases one man was imposing his will upon the other, and both knew it. When Mayweather arrived at the post-fight press conference, he was initially respectful of Maidana's competitiveness but closed his praise by adding, "Next time, just don't hit me in the balls so much."

Maidana showed then that his feistiness had not dissipated. "Next time let me use my gloves," he snapped. "Give me a (bleeping) rematch."

In the ring after the fight, Mayweather had said if the fans wanted to see it again in September, that was "no problem," and when Maidana snapped at him in the post-fight press conference he fired back differently.

"We can take it back down there right now if you want," Mayweather said, safe in the knowledge no one would let them. "Put the ring back up. ... It's not a problem. If he feels he won, we can do it again in September."

That was the only time all night that Floyd Mayweather Jr. didn't get a fight from Marcos Maidana.

Rapper 2 Chainz added some glitz to the official Mayweather-Maidana weigh-in on May 2.

REPORT CARD

THE MAIN EVENT
A

Mismatch? What mismatch? Maidana's brawling tactics and fighting spirit made it one of the most competitive – and entertaining – fights in Mayweather's long career.

MAYWEATHER
B+

One might be tempted to criticize Mayweather because he had difficulty. One might be wiser to say that Maidana brought out the best in "Money," who weathered a harsh storm and won.

MAIDANA
B+

The Argentine came in with a good game plan and the ability to pull it off. Had he fought a little less in the center of the ring, he might've pulled off an historic upset.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER SR.
Mayweather's trainer

A-

Senior remained as calm and cool as junior, which had to be reassuring for the younger Mayweather when things were hairy early in the fight.

ROBERT GARCIA Maidana's trainer
A-

Garcia is the architect of the new and improved Maidana, who boxes better and smarter. He tried to get Maidana to keep the pressure on Mayweather during the fight.

THE JUDGES
B-

Dave Moretti's 116-112 card was closest to reality. Next best was the 114-114 by Michael Pernick. Burt Clements' 117-111 card (nine rounds to three) shortchanged Maidana.

TONY WEEKS The referee
B

I generally like when a referee remains as invisible as possible, which was the case for the most part on May 3. I did think Weeks was too quick to break the fighters apart at times.

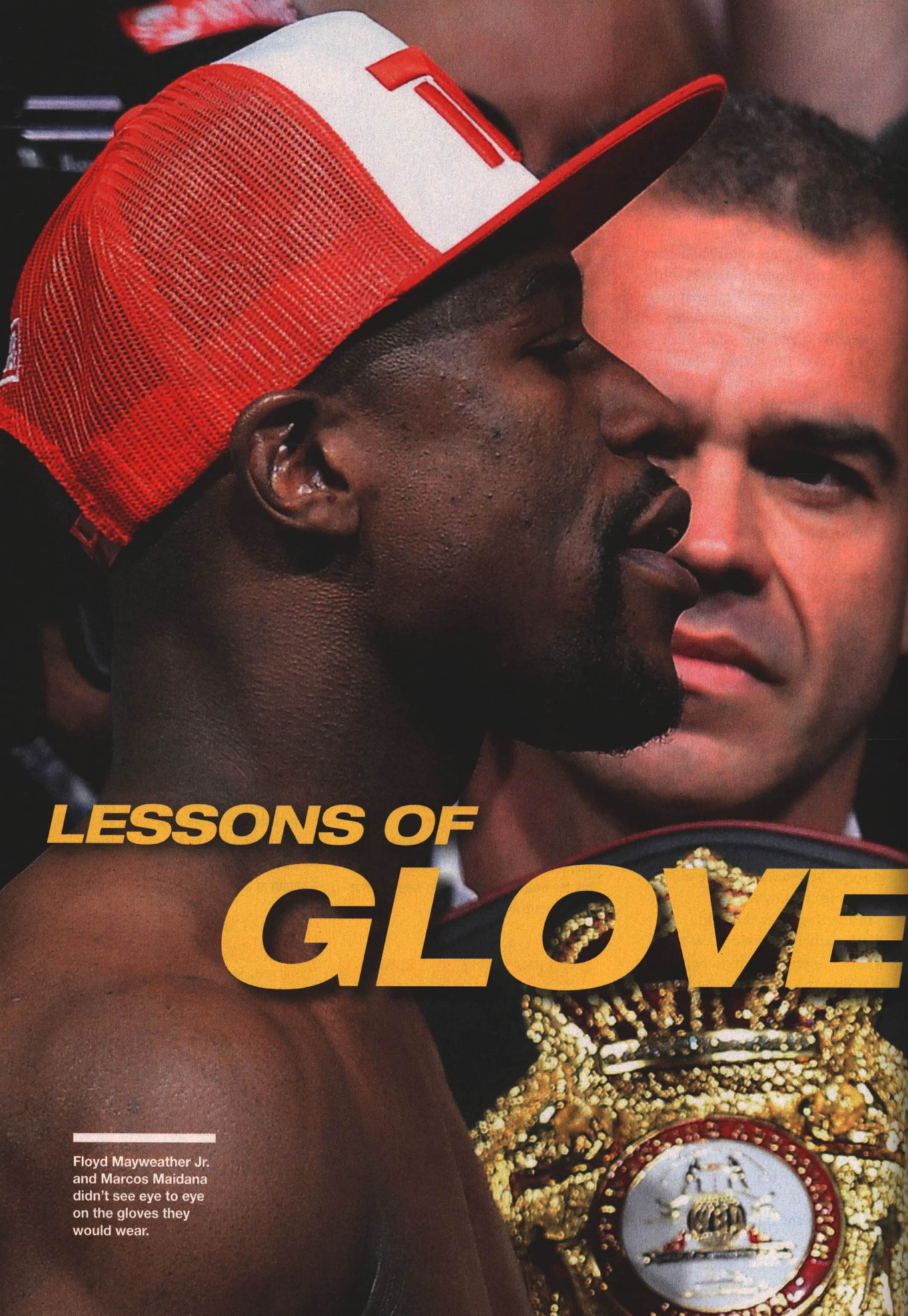
THE ATMOSPHERE
A

You gotta love fervent Argentine fans singing songs normally heard in soccer stadiums and cheering wildly for their favorite son. Mayweather's fans also raised the decibel level.

THE UNDERCARD
B-

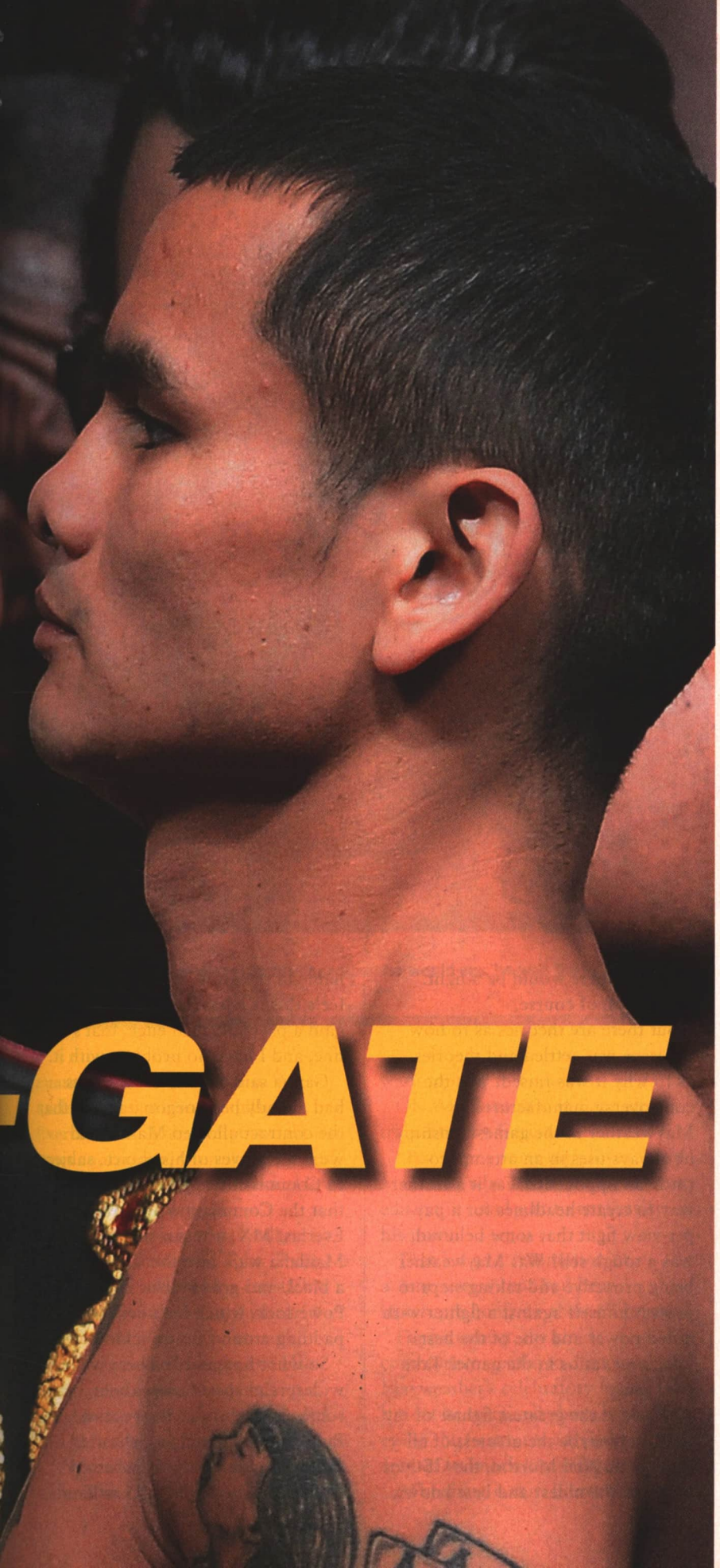
Amir Khan's domination of Luis Collazo was impressive but also disappointing to fans who hoped to see a competitive fight. Adrien Broner was expected to manhandle Carlos Molina.

- Michael Rosenthal



LESSONS OF GLOVE

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Marcos Maidana didn't see eye to eye on the gloves they would wear.



-GATE

STANDARDIZED GLOVES WOULD PROTECT FIGHTERS AND PREVENT SQUABBLES LIKE THE ONE THAT PRECEDED **MAYWEATHER-MAIDANA**

By **Norm Frauenheim**

They once were a uniform brown. Then red. Now they can be a canvas for an endless array of colors and expressions. Flags and faces adorn them. But gloves were never intended to be interpretative art. They're meant for hands and maybe faces, although fractured noses and foreheads with more scars than faded lines on an old map are a sure sign that boxing gloves are designed, first and foremost, for the pair of clenched weapons that identify the trade.

But to do what? Protect fighters or augment power that endangers them?

The question was never more apparent than in the noisy confusion that erupted on the night before Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s majority decision over Marcos Maidana on May 3.

The controversy broke out during the rules meeting after the weigh-in for a welterweight fight worth millions of dollars to the fighters, Showtime and Las Vegas' MGM Grand. Amid all of the usual minutiae, the meeting is also the time and place that each camp brings their gloves and places them on a table for inspection by the Nevada State Athletic Commission and the opposing corner.

Mayweather, adviser Leonard

Ellerbe and attorney John Hornewer initially got suspicious at the way Maidana's preferred gloves, custom-made by Everlast in Argentina's pale blue-and-white colors, were wrapped, according to Grant Gloves manufacturer Grant Elvis Phillips, who was there. Mayweather wears Grant.

"It looked kind of like saran wrap, something you'd put your leftover chicken in," said Phillips, who at the time said the gloves looked as if they were deflated. "It just wasn't the factory wrap that you would usually see and expect."

Mayweather tried on one of the gloves and immediately complained about the lack of padding at the knuckles. The controversy was on. Mayweather and Ellerbe demanded that the Nevada Commission say no to the blue-and-white pair. Each glove weighed the mandatory eight ounces, but Ellerbe said most of the padding was at the wrist. The commission agreed. It would not allow Maidana to wear the custom pair. Instead, it approved Maidana's alternate pair, a factory-red MX model made mostly with horsehair and called "Mexican Everlast" by Maidana trainer Robert Garcia. But Mayweather and Ellerbe said no to those, too.

"Make him wear these," Mayweather shouted as he pointed to his Grant models, which are said to be favored by fighters who have a history of hand problems.

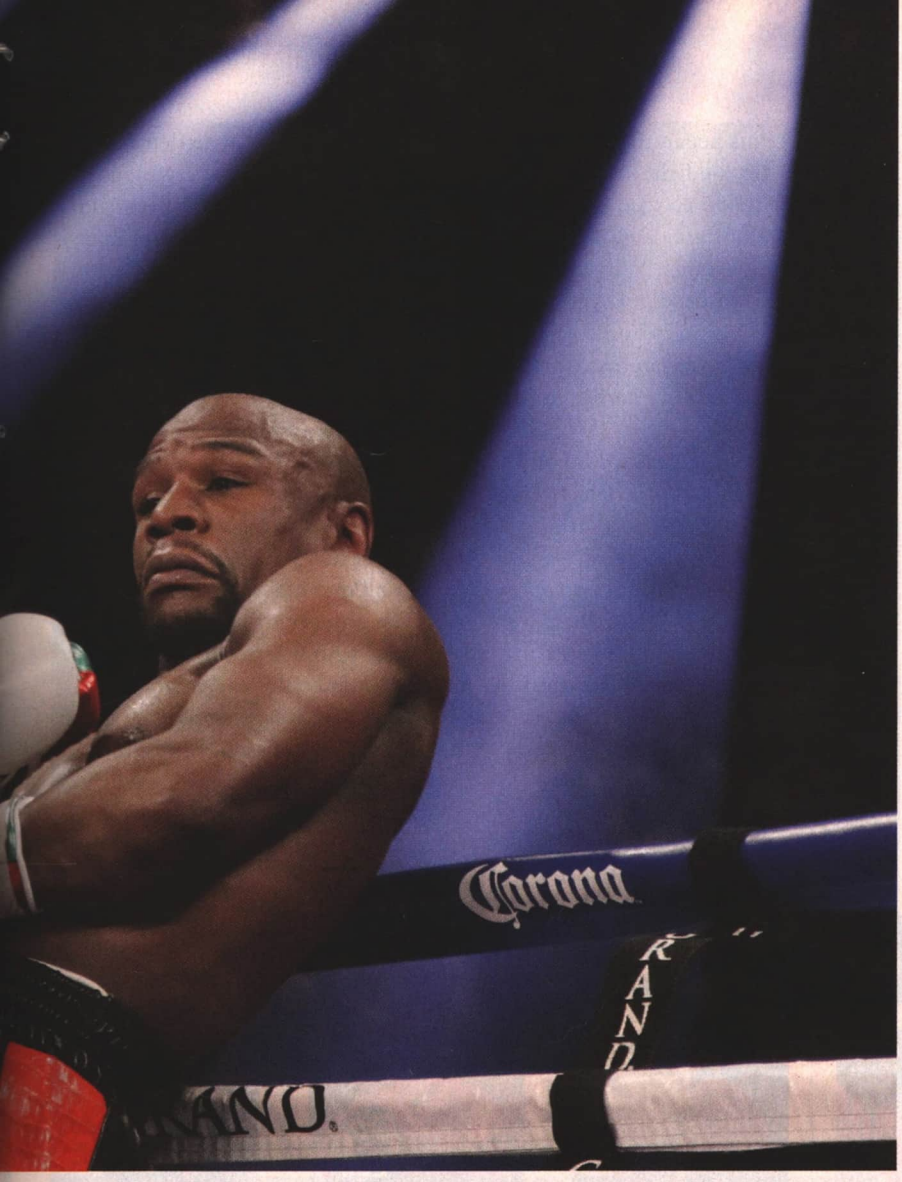
What followed was a rules meeting with no more rules. Ellerbe threatened that there would be no fight. He walked out. Mayweather walked out. Garcia walked out. Maidana wasn't there to walk out. In a ballroom up an escalator from where the contentious meeting had taken place, the media was suddenly abuzz with talk that the fight was off. Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer rushed to the scene, assuring everyone that the differences would be ironed out and that, yes, there would be a fight. There was, of course.

But there are theories as to how the issue was settled and theories as to why it was raised. Was the controversy manufactured by Mayweather in the gamesmanship he always uses in an attempt to rattle an opponent? Was it a further way to create headlines for a pay-per-view fight that some believed was a tough sell? Was Mayweather being proactive and taking steps to protect himself against a fighter with noted power and one of the best knockout ratios in the game? Take your pick.

"Floyd is the greatest fighter of my time and maybe the greatest of all time," said Neil Morton, the CEO of Everlast, the oldest and best known name in the glove business. "If he feels this is what he needs to do to gain a psychological edge, that's fine, and I have no problem with it."

Garcia said the choice of gloves had already been negotiated and that the contract allowed Maidana to wear the gloves of his choice, subject to Commission approval. Given that the Commission approved Everlast MX, it was a surprise to see Maidana walk into the ring wearing a black-and-gold pair of Everlast Powerlock, which includes foam padding around the knuckles.

So what happened? There was widespread speculation about some eleventh-hour negotiations. But Maidana manager Sebastian Contursi would not say whether Maidana, who had a $1.5 million



Mayweather won the glove dispute because, he would say, he was the 'A' side of the promotion.

guarantee, got a pay raise in exchange for not wearing the Everlast MX. After the post-fight news conference, Contursi only said an agreement had been struck. He said it was confidential.

Whatever it was, it was still controversial after the fight. There was a lot of talk about a rematch. "Sure," Mayweather said when asked about a possible rematch, perhaps in September. But he also complained about Maidana's roughhouse tactics, which included low blows.

"Next time, don't hit me in the balls so much," Mayweather said. "I want to have more kids."

OK, Maidana said in Spanish translated by Garcia.

"But let me wear my gloves," said Maidana, who had a blue-and-white edition in hand just to emphasize his point.

That led to a resumption of a controversy that had been interrupted only by their 12 rounds.

For a moment, the glove controversy seemed to dampen Mayweather's celebratory mood. Like the cut he sustained above his right eye in the fourth round, Glovegate seemed to knock him off stride.

"The thing is this: I have a life after boxing; he has a life after boxing," Mayweather said as he looked at the audience and then at Maidana. "This already is a brutal sport. Of course we are here to please the fans. But what about our health after boxing is over? Half of the boxers that are in the fight game right now can't even articulate well. So don't we care about the fighters' health?

"Then they're always asking the questions like: How did this guy die? Why is he in the hospital? Why did he lose all his money? He lost all his money because he can't count his money. I'm here to protect all the fighters. Not just me. He has family, too."

Mayweather also said that stardom, his undisputed perch at the top of the pound-for-pound debate, comes with some prerogatives.

"Listen, I'm the A-side, like I said before," said Mayweather, who then recalled a day when he wasn't before his decision in 2007 over Oscar De La Hoya. "When I fought Oscar De La Hoya, I was the B-side. When I was the B-side, Oscar De La Hoya chose the gloves."

A-side, B-side or Z-side, should anybody other than a neutral side choose the gloves? They are, after all, at the point of attack in a sport where the respective athletes can only fight if they are licensed by the state. Modern standards mandate eight-ounce gloves for weight divisions up to 147 pounds, (welterweight) and 10-ounce above that. Other than that, there is an apparent lack of consistent standards. That bothers manufacturer Russ Anber of Rival, a Montreal company that makes gloves for light heavyweight Jean Pascal and junior featherweight Leo Santa Cruz, among others.

"There are things that I think could be the same and should be," Anber said. "I mean, everybody fights a 3-minute round. Everybody fights four, six, eight, 10 or 12 rounds. And everybody fights with gloves.

"So, I don't understand why there cannot be unified rules. There are unified rules for a standing eight-count and a three-knockdown rule. They have all of that. So why can't there be standardized rules for the equipment that are the same across the board for every division, eight-ounce gloves or 10-ounce?"

Anber has been in and around the boxing business for nearly four decades. He has worked corners, sold equipment and now makes it. Like many long-timers, he remembers the infamous Luis Resto-Billy Collins Jr. story. In 1983, trainer Panama Lewis removed padding from Resto's glove. Resto then beat Collins into a bloody pulp, winning a 10-round decision that left 21-year-old Collins with impaired vision and unable to fight again. Collins began to drink. Nine months after the fight at New York's Madison Square Garden, Collins died in an auto accident. Resto was convicted of assault, conspiracy and possession of a deadly weapon. He served 2½ years in prison. Lewis did a year and was banned from ever working another corner in the United States.

Resto-Collins is perhaps boxing's biggest scandal over the last 50 years. But there have been others. Doc Kearns, Jack Dempsey's former manager, told *Sports Illustrated* that Dempsey beat Jess Willard with gloves loaded with plaster in a brutal fight for the heavyweight title in 1919. The story was printed in 1964 after Kearns' death. Dempsey won a libel suit. The magazine retracted the allegation and paid Dempsey a financial settlement. No matter how serious or frivolous, Anber says the long history of glove controversies serves as a constant guide to his glove-making.

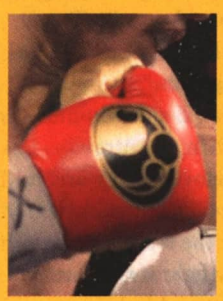
"Look, I take great pride in manufacturing my gloves" he said. "I want them to look good, feel good. I want it to protect the hand and offer the padding that it is supposed to offer, so that your knuckles never meet the face of an opponent. It should never break down. I take pride in doing that. So does Grant. Not all manufacturers do."

The absence of standards troubles Anber, who worries that a lack of guidelines could lead to another tragedy like Resto-Collins.

"From commission to commission, there is no standard on how a glove should be constructed," he said. "It

WHAT'S IN A GLOVE?

The five major boxing glove manufacturers and what makes them distinctive.



GRANT

Made in: Mexico
Characteristics: They strike a well-made balance between power and protection. Fighters like to say that they conform to the hand's shape and provide good support at the wrist. Floyd Mayweather Jr. now wears them. So do Wladimir Klitschko, Bernard Hopkins, Tim Bradley and Sergey Kovalev.

WINNING

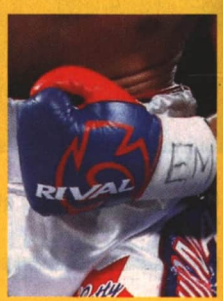
Made in: Japan
Characteristics: The gloves are well-liked because they last, which means they are widely used in training. But fighters often call them "pillows." They provide a lot of protection for fighters with hand problems. Manny Pacquiao wears them in training. Mayweather wore them in fights before he moved to Grant.

EVERLAST

Made in: China
Characteristics: True to their name, the gloves have been around for more than a century. They're made to protect while not diminishing power. Trainer Robert Garcia calls the MX model "the Mexican Everlast." Marcos Maidana, Brandon Rios, Nonito Donaire, Miguel Cotto and Deontay Wilder wear them. Canelo Alvarez signed a deal in February to wear Everlast.

CLETO REYES

Made in: Mexico
Characteristics: They have long been favored by power punchers. In frequent glove controversies, it is argued that the Cleto Reyes brand has less padding along the knuckles. The padding is primarily horsehair, which doesn't have the so-called "memory" that allows foam to regain its shape. Pacquaio and Juan Manuel Marquez wear them.



RIVAL

Made in: China
Characteristics: This Montreal-based brand has a cutting-edge look to it. Fighters say they like the way the glove fits and feels. It's a brand that works at blending three elements – support at the wrist, protection along the knuckles and ample power. Jean Pascal, Keith Thurman, Leo Santa Cruz and Yuriorkis Gamboa wear them.

GRANT: NAOKI FUTURA; WINNING: JEFFREY MAYER/GETTY IMAGES; EVERLAST: SCOTT HEAVY; REYES: JOHN GURZINSKI; RIVAL: ELSA/GOLDEN BOY

Luis Resto maimed the face of Billy Collins with doctored gloves.

'I THINK THAT THIS LATEST CONTROVERSY CAN MOVE THINGS FORWARD IN TERMS OF PUTTING TOGETHER A PROCESS IN DETERMINING JUST HOW GLOVES ARE MADE, NOT JUST FOR FIGHTS IN NEVADA, BUT EVERYWHERE.'
—LEONARD ELLERBE

just says it has to weigh eight ounces or 10 ounces. It doesn't say where that weight should be or anything. I worry about stuff like that."

Confusion surrounding the latest chapter in boxing's long book on glove controversies resulted in some predictable cynicism and a lot of unconfirmed speculation about how it happened and why it happened. The familiar chaos, however, is a dangerous recipe for a repeat of what the battered business can ill-afford.

As the Mayweather-Maidana controversy unfolded, Schaefer and Ellerbe lobbied for change.

"My fighter's health and safety is more important than just putting on a show," said Ellerbe, CEO of Mayweather Promotions. "I think that this latest controversy can move things forward in terms of putting together a process in determining just how gloves are made, not just for fights in Nevada, but everywhere."

Ellerbe complained about gloves padded with horsehair, which tends to shift and lacks the so-called memory that allows foam to regain its original shape. Cleto Reyes and Everlast MX are primarily padded with horsehair. Both are favored by fighters with power. They are considered "punchers' gloves."

"Gloves made just with horsehair padding will not be allowed in Nevada," predicted Ellerbe. "That's just my opinion."

Schaefer said more and more big-name fighters are using custom-made gloves. He urged that commissions look at the trend. Nevada has decided to do exactly that. Ten days after the Mayweather-Maidana fight, Nevada, under the new direction of Executive Director Robert Bennett, assigned commissioners Bill Brady and Anthony Marnell to investigate.

"They will kind of become our glove experts and re-analyze what gloves are approved and if any changes are needed," Nevada Commission Chairman Francisco Aguilar said.

It's a beginning, perhaps, in a search for an elusive end to a long-running controversy, although Malaysia solved it before it ever became an issue nearly 40 years ago. Muhammad Ali was there to fight Joe Bugner, whom he beat by a unanimous decision in Kuala Lumpur on June 30, 1975. At the rules meeting, it was announced that the gloves would be held in jail until the opening bell.

"You're putting my gloves in jail?" Ali was reported to have said. "This is awful. How can you do that? How can you put gloves in jail? They ain't done nothing yet."

That Malaysian commissioner must have known that gloves have a history of doing too much before anybody ever puts them on. RING

TRUE TO HIS HERITAGE

BILLY JOE SAUNDERS MAINTAINS THE LIFESTYLE OF HIS 'TRAVELLER' ANCESTORS, WHICH INCLUDES FISTICUFFS

By **Gareth A Davies**

British middleweight Billy Joe Saunders is in a race with heavyweight Tyson Fury to become the first boxer from the "Traveller" community to win a world title.

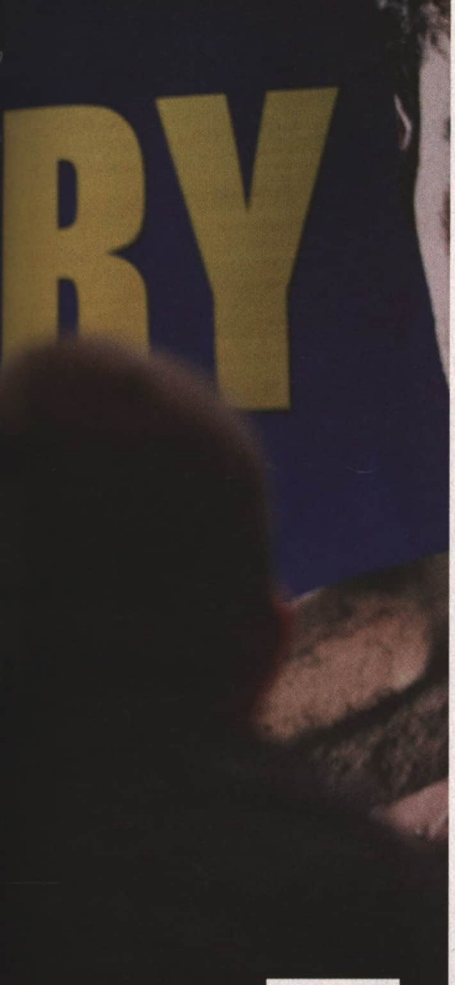
But Saunders, who lives in a caravan on a site just north of London with his parents on one side and his sister on the other, has broken with Traveller tradition ahead of his fight on the Fury-Dereck Chisora card July 26 in Manchester: He has bought a home.

The five-bedroom house – complete with gym and games – is only for use during training camps, though. Saunders has no plans to leave the caravan.

Saunders keeps with many traditions from his community. One of them is keeping horses. He competes in carriage racing horses at gypsy fairs, a tradition going back centuries, among other activities.

"I've had horses with my dad since I was 3, 4 years old," he told me. "I've got nine at the moment, and I ride them all and see them every day. I have land where we keep them. When I'm in camp, my dad goes to see them each day."

Saunders hails from a long line of fighters, and it's clearly in his blood.



Billy Joe Saunders is scheduled to face Emanuele Blandamura on the Tyson Fury-Dereck Chisora card.

His great-grandfather, Absolom Beeney, was a champion in the heyday of bare-knuckle fights, which continue to this day in gypsy culture, mainly as an organized way of settling arguments.

His father, Tom, a former amateur boxer, was also involved in a bare-knuckle fight "to sort things out many years ago," but he and Billy Joe are now aligned with the Marquess of Queensberry Rules.

Watch out for Saunders; he's a talent. Promoter Frank Warren insists that they will be looking to a world title challenge against WBO middleweight beltholder Peter Quillin, with Saunders ranked No. 1 by the sanctioning body.

"But I'd also fancy myself against some of the British elite middleweights right now, Martin Murray and Matthew Macklin," Saunders told me. "And the world champion, Felix Sturm. I'm developing fast, and my time is coming."

★

JAMES DEGALE

British super middleweight James DeGale revealed just days before his fight against Brandon Gonzales on the blockbuster Carl Froch-George Groves card May 31 at Wembley Stadium that he recently was "depressed and considering quitting."

DeGale, who won the Olympic middleweight gold medal six years ago, said he had been within days of retiring at only 28 years old.

"I had three months last autumn when I was doing the sums and talking to my parents about leaving the sport," explained the boxer, who has always taken the counsel of his parents. "I really was deeply depressed about it all. Boxing has been my life since I was 11 years old, and it was all I knew. I have invested in a couple of properties from the money I have earned in boxing as a professional, and I wondered if it was time to walk away."

"Every time it looked like I might get near to an opportunity of fighting for a world title, it fell through. Boxing is so political, and it is all about being positioned right. I am in a perfect place now."

★

AMIR KHAN AND KELL BROOK

Amir Khan has been upping the ante against Kell Brook since Khan's great victory over Luis Collazo on May 3 in Las Vegas, saying he doesn't believe Brook will fight IBF welterweight titleholder Shawn Porter as ordered by the sanctioning body.

Brook and promoter Eddie Hearn say Khan is wrong.

"I don't know where he's getting that from," Brook told me when I put that to him. "I'm 28, I'm a young lion, I'll get in with anyone, any name you speak of I'll get in and fight. This is a short-lived career, and I want to get in there with the very best out there. I want to get in there with the best and beat the best.

"I should have been a world champion a while ago. Now, I'm not saying that it's not all been my fault, but there's been politics in the way. In that time, in the gym, you never stop learning new things. I've had to get over some bad things in my career. It's made me a stronger fighter, and I just want my chance now to show the world I belong at the very top."

Brook, ranked No. 1 by the IBF, is desperate for a contest with Khan and believes his rival is avoiding what would be a huge clash in the U.K.

"WHEN I beat Porter, I'll be the man," Brook said. "Everyone's going on about Porter and his devastating win against Paulie Malignaggi. Everyone will be talking about me, and I'll be a world champion, and

U.K. TOP 15

1. CARL FROCH
2. AMIR KHAN
3. KELL BROOK
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. GEORGE GROVES
6. TYSON FURY
7. SCOTT QUIGG
8. MARTIN MURRAY
9. JAMES DEGALE
10. NATHAN CLEVERLY

Five more (in alphabetical order): Paul Butler, Billy Joe Saunders, Stuart Hall, Ricky Burns, Jamie McDonnell.

Through fights of May 18

that part is definitely there 100 percent. I believe that me beating Porter in my next fight opens the doors to massive fights.

"I don't know if Khan's said anywhere that he wants to fight the winner, but I'll be a genuine world champion. I'll have proved it by beating a top champion. He says he wants to beat the top guys. There'll be so much demand for it, there will be nowhere for him to hide. He'll have to take the fight."

One man seemingly with the respect of everyone in the division is Keith Thurman. Brook is in agreement on that. "Keith is very similar to myself," he said. "I've got a lot of respect for Keith Thurman. He's a very good fighter – he can punch, he's a young lion like myself. ... The welterweight division is busting with top fighters, and Thurman is definitely one of them. The welterweight is well alive right now."

Like others in the welterweight division, Brook would relish the opportunity to step in against Floyd Mayweather Jr. It's unlikely, but if it's there, he'd take it.

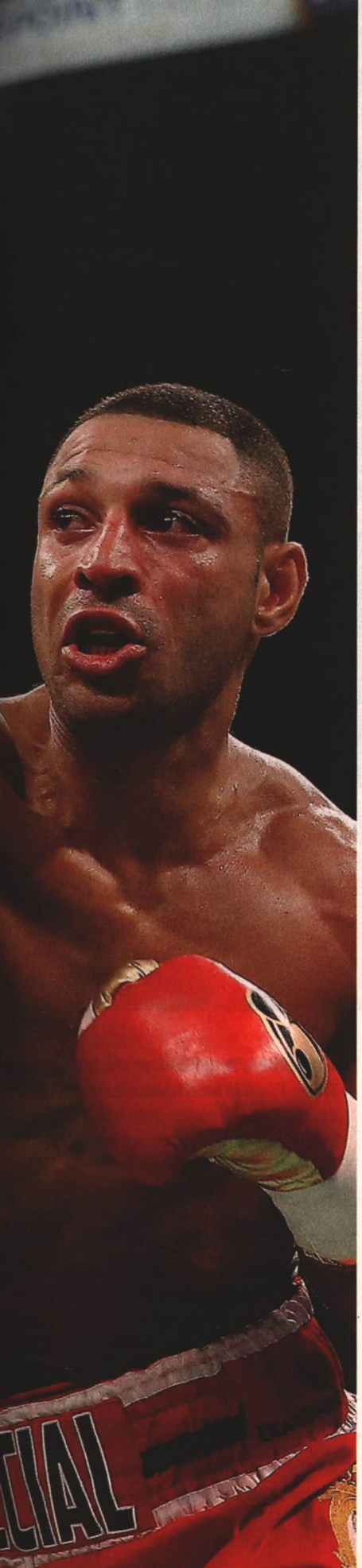
"I'm all for it," he said. "I just need the Porter victory. I'm getting talked about a lot more in America. I'm on the world stage, and why not Mayweather? I'll be 33-0, an unbeaten fighter who's taking a man who's been at the top for a long time, who's getting no younger. So why not?"

In reality, Brook's stock is not high enough in the U.S. at present for that matchup to readily materialize. Danny Garcia, Marcos Maidana (again), Keith Thurman and Amir Khan are ahead in the line.

Eddie Hearn, Brook's promoter, was working on the Porter contest as this issue went to press. There is still hope it could take place in the U.K.

"I'd obviously like it to be in Sheffield or England because of the fans," Brook said, "but why not take the fans to Vegas? I don't mind

Kell Brook (pictured fighting Vyacheslav Senchenko) believes a victory over IBF welterweight titleholder Shawn Porter would lift him to another level.



either way as long as I'm in that ring with Porter. I really don't mind. I just want to get in there and get my chance and take it with both hands."

Hearn, meanwhile, who continues to sign up fighters – James DeGale and Nathan Cleverly, among others – stressed the IBF ruling on Porter-Brook.

"Brook is a mandatory challenger for Shawn Porter, who was allowed to fight Paulie Malignaggi under the written confirmation that he'd fight Brook before July 19," he said.

That negotiation was due to go to purse bids if no agreement was in place by May 21. The overtures from Kenny Porter, father and trainer of the incumbent IBF champion, have been that the fight will take place.

"We want it to happen," Hearn told me, "but when you are in the mandatory position for an IBF title, the purse split normally determines the route of negotiations through the value offered to fighters. The split is 75/25, so it's very difficult when you're on the 25 end to bring that fight to the U.K. I've got no problems going to America and nor has Kell. I think he's up for that challenge, but my main concern is Golden Boy understanding the ruling made by the IBF, which is that this fight must take place before July 19.

"We want to get moving. ... They were talking about trying to bolt it onto the Alvarez-Lara fight (July 12) in Vegas. But if they can't do that, let's do it in Sheffield on July 12. We believe it's a great fight. Yes, it's a tough fight for Kell, but I believe that Porter is a little bit overhyped after the Malignaggi victory. Don't get me wrong, it was a great victory, but it's time for Kell to step up and to stand up to these top-level fighters and deliver. And I believe he can."

★

SCOTT QUIGG AND CARL FRAMPTON

Emboldened by the success of bums on seats for the Carl Froch-George Groves fight at Wembley Stadium – the biggest stadium fight in the U.K. post World War II – Hearn is now ambitiously looking to create the most fan-friendly contests imaginable.

And that means Scott Quigg against Carl Frampton, a fight which has huge appeal yet has Frampton's promoter, Barry McGuigan, and Hearn at loggerheads.

"We want the Carl Frampton fight now for Quigg," Hearn said. "This Carl Froch-George Groves second meeting has shown how big these domestic fights are. We want the Frampton fight. They are chasing Leo Santa Cruz, but I've told them they're not going to get that fight. I expect an announcement soon that they'll fight Kiko Martinez, and we'll probably fight Leo Santa Cruz, as I'm talking to Richard Schaefer about that fight. It'll be a wonderful fight. There are so many great fights to be made right now, and I am chasing hard with them all."

Another possibility in the same vein is a Nathan Cleverly-Tony Bellew rematch. It's another "grudge" affair on this side of the pond, made more real with Cleverly coming through his first cruiserweight contest against Shawn Corbin. Admittedly, and Bellew said as much himself as a ringside analyst in Cardiff where Cleverly's debut at 200 pounds took place, Corbin was put away with ease by the Welshman. But it has to be marked down as a warm-up more than a test. Cleverly and Bellew will both fight on the same bill in July or August, and the smack talk will begin if they are both victorious. Bad blood reigns between them.

It's all brewing up nicely over here.

Gareth A Davies is Boxing Correspondent for *The Telegraph*, London.

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialogue – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

Beginning this year, the editors of THE RING collect excerpts from Fischer's online column from the previous month to appear in the printed edition. The following excerpts are from the May 2, 12 and 19 editions of the Monday and Friday mailbag.

CARLA, a new boxing fan and first-time writer to the mailbag, was impressed

Mike Alvarado (right) would've been better served by fighting aggressively against Juan Manuel Marquez.

with Juan Manuel Marquez's gritty unanimous decision over Mike Alvarado but was perplexed as to why the younger, bigger man gave up so many of the early rounds without a struggle. Carla, who figures that Alvarado will be mad at himself when he watches a tape of the fight, asked Fischer why the Denver native didn't try to set a faster pace earlier.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I don't think Alvarado will be too mad at himself when he watches the Marquez fight. He feels that he did well enough to hold his head up – despite the lopsided official scorecards – and I think a lot fans agree with him.

However, Alvarado and his trainer, Shann Vilhauer, probably agree with you that a fast start would have given the younger underdog more of a shot at victory. Hindsight is always 20-20, though.

Alvarado didn't start fast because he thought that he might be able to counter the great counterpuncher by waiting and forcing the older man to lead. In the past, boxers who made Marquez lead gave him fits. Freddy Norwood and Floyd Mayweather Jr. outpointed him doing so. The problem with this strategy is that Alvarado isn't a boxer, and he isn't anywhere near the talent level of Norwood (since you're a new fan you'll have to Google "Lil Hagler" to get an idea of how crafty he was in the late 1990s), let alone Mayweather.

As Tim Bradley suggested a few days before the fight, Alvarado would have been better served fighting in his usual aggressive manner from the opening bell. Live and learn. Alvarado fought well enough over the second half of the bout to make for a hell of a fight to witness live or on TV. Live was much better, though, take my word for it.

KARL, of Brunswick, Georgia, is suspicious of the punching power Marquez has exhibited in recent welterweight bouts – namely the fourth bout with Manny Pacquiao and the Alvarado fight. He tells Fischer that the broad, muscular shoulders and chest acne that other fans noticed in the Alvarado fight raise suspicions that the 40-year-old veteran, who turned pro at featherweight, is not "playing fair" even though he has never failed a drug test.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: We really don't know that, Karl; not without stronger evidence than chest acne, broad shoulders and punching power (which Marquez has always had). I've got acne on my chest and my shoulders, are a lot broader at age 43 than they were at 23. It doesn't mean that I'm doping.

We can suspect PEDs all we want, but without concrete proof, anything said is possibly slanderous and anything written is potentially libelous.

That's the bottom line for me. And here's another bottom line: EVERY professional fighter – regardless of age, gender, style, physical attributes and performance – is suspect in this day and age. The fighters who are "clean" are those who submit to year-round random Olympic-style drug testing with an independent anti-doping agency with a proven track record, such as VADA, and then make their results public.

Nonito Donaire does continue to do 24/7/365 testing, I believe, in case we wanted to make a change.

MALCOLM, of Dublin, Ireland, asked Fischer if there's an opponent – beyond Marcos Maidana – who could push Floyd Mayweather Jr. to the limit before he retires.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I think there are more than a few worthy opponents out there for Mayweather, but he would have to go up in weight to make those fights happen. The winner of the June 7 middleweight championship fight between Sergio Martinez and Miguel Cotto would make for a very marketable event – and Mayweather would not be a huge favorite against either veteran.

If Erislandy Lara beats Canelo Alvarez in July, the Cuban lefty could present some style problems for Mayweather, who has not faced many world-class technicians during his Hall-of-Fame career. If Alvarez beats Lara, he can be brought back as an opponent (the most marketable outside of Pacquiao), possibly in Mayweather's farewell fight in 2015.

I think if the winner of the imminent Shawn Porter-Kell Brook IBF welterweight title fight takes on undefeated contender Keith Thurman, the winner of that showdown would make a worthy 147-pound challenger for Mayweather. RING

Trainer Freddie Roach described prospect Julian Rodriguez as "explosive."

JULIAN RODRIGUEZ

THE JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT HAS THE PEDIGREE AND ROLE MODEL (MANNY PACQUIAO) TO SUCCEED

By **Keith Idec**

THE ESSENTIALS

Age: 19
Weight class: Junior welterweight
Height: 5 feet, 9 inches
Stance: Orthodox
Hometown: Hasbrouck Heights, N.J.
Record: 3-0 (2 KOs)
Biggest strengths: Boxing IQ, maturity and professionalism ★ sets traps and goes to the body very effectively for a young fighter ★ vast sparring experience against current and former world champions.
Biggest question marks: Defense in exchanges ★ untested as a pro against anyone near his talent level.

Freddie Roach readily admits that the boxer who best prepared Manny Pacquiao for his rematch with Tim Bradley had all of three professional fights on his record and can't drink legally.

"Julian Rodriguez is definitely a good prospect," Roach said. "He listens well. In training camp I tried to help him along the way, how to handle Manny's speed a little bit better and so forth. He adapted to that very well. Every day I had four sparring partners, and every day he continually gave me the best work the entire camp."

Rodriguez, 19, has been working with pros since he was 12, thus the accomplished amateur wasn't as surprised as Roach that he could

ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

push Pacquiao during their spirited sparring sessions at Roach's famed Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, California. The private Pacquiao did surprise Rodriguez. For all his fame and fortune, the Filipino superstar's genuine humility and unassuming approach to life in and out of the ring replicated everything Rodriguez had heard and read about one of the most popular boxers in the world.

"I took a lot from that experience because it showed me how you're supposed to live as a fighter," said Rodriguez, who is trained by his father, Alex Devia. "He goes to the gym, he goes to eat and goes right home. He hangs out with his friends, but he stays home. That's the way a fighter should behave. That motivated me because I saw how one of the top pound-for-pound fighters of the last 10 years lives. It was encouraging because that's exactly what I do when I'm in my training camps. I go to the gym and I go home.

"And he's just a generous, great guy. I can't even put it into words how much I learned from him. He inspired me. I want to be like that when hopefully I'm in that position one day. He has a bunch of money, can do whatever he wants, but he still is a great guy and works very hard."

Rodriguez, a junior welterweight, recognizes he is a world away from the level on which Pacquiao operates. The Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, native believes, however, he has been built for boxing greatness, preparing for more than a decade to become somebody in this star-starved sport.

Nicknamed "Hammer Hands" since he began beating up bigger, older kids as a precocious 8-year-old at the Joe Grier Boxing Academy in gritty, neighboring Paterson, Rodriguez went 221-9 during a 10-year amateur career that concluded with a National Golden Gloves championship at 141 pounds in May 2013. He developed a pro style at a young age, becoming just the 10th amateur from New Jersey to win a National Golden Gloves crown in the 86-year history of the tournament.

He signed a promotional contract with Bob Arum's Top Rank Inc. last summer and made a sensational pro debut, a 51-second knockout of Kevin Benson on Sept. 28 in Atlantic City, just three months after graduating from Hasbrouck Heights High School. Rodriguez was 3-0 (2 KOs) at press time for this issue.

"There are two things we look at when we're going to sign a prospect, as far as investing in someone from day one," said Top Rank's vice president of boxing operations, Carl Moretti, a northern New Jersey resident who followed Rodriguez's amateur career closely. "That's ability and marketability. Julian clearly has both, in our eyes."

Managed by Pat Lynch, who guided the late legend Arturo Gatti's entire career, Rodriguez is building a sizeable fan base in New Jersey. Roach thinks this aggressive, cerebral boxer-puncher eventually can attract mass appeal if he stays on his current course.

"Defense is a little bit of an issue because he is very explosive," Roach said. "Sometimes, when you're explosive like that, you have to watch out for the defensive end of it. But he definitely has a big heart, and I think he has a bright future." RNG

Keith Idec covers boxing for *The Record*, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @ Idecboxing.

3 MORE TO WATCH

ANTOINE DOUGLAS
MIDDLEWEIGHT
(14-0, 9 KOs)

This Burke, Virginia, native has been matched methodically during his brief but busy pro career, yet has shown solid skill and power while building on his 14-fight winning streak. The 21-year-old prospect's high-volume, fan-friendly style already has landed him bouts on ESPN2 and Showtime.

ZACHARY OCHOA
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
(7-0, 4 KOs)

A smart boxer-puncher from Brooklyn, the 22-year-old Ochoa is unbeaten since turning pro in September 2011. He hasn't been tested at all, but his consistent, crisp jab and awkward style should serve this Puerto Rican prospect represented by Golden Boy Promotions well as he moves forward.

JERRY ODOM
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
(11-0, 10 KOs)

As with Douglas, New Jersey-based GH3 Promotions has mostly matched this punishing puncher from Bowie, Maryland, carefully early in his career. The WBA has ranked Odom, who has hurt heavyweights in sparring, as its No. 15 contender at 168 pounds despite his limited level of opposition.

The side of the head is a good target if you want to hurt your opponent.

ACUTE ANGLES

HOOKS AND UPPERCUTS ARE THE MOST DEBILITATING PUNCHES BECAUSE OF THE ROTATIONAL FORCES THEY PRODUCE ON THE BRAIN

By **Scott LaFee**

By some estimates, the force of the average professional boxing punch is roughly 52 g's, or basically 52 times the force of gravity at the Earth's surface. That might not sound like much. Every time you jump in the air, you're basically defying the planet's massive gravitational force; plopping down in an easy chair can generate as much as 10 g's.

But let's translate that amount of g force another way: It's been described as akin to getting hit with a 13-pound bowling ball traveling 20 mph. Now that's gotta hurt. Just how much and how badly depends upon physics and location, which are inextricably linked.

Let's begin with the physics. The power of a boxer's punch depends primarily upon how fast a thrown fist is moving when it strikes an opponent. In mathematical terms, velocity is described as distance over time. There are two ways to make a flying fist move faster: lengthen the distance it travels so that it can pick up additional speed or shorten the time of deceleration.

A fist suddenly smashing into an unyielding face transfers much greater momentum – and thus more damaging force – than a fist striking a softer, more pliable target, which

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

extends however minutely the time of impact.

Smart, well-trained boxers know this and react almost instinctively. When they see a blow to the head coming, they may slightly relax the neck, allowing the head to move backward or turn sideways upon impact. It's sometimes called "riding the punch," extending the time of impact to reduce the force of the collision and its effect.

In purely physical terms, a direct, straight-on blow to the face is less likely to cause injury than a punch coming from the sides or below. A woodpecker can smack its head against a tree with forces reaching up to 1,200 g's without damage because, in part, its head is traveling in the same plane as its body. It is not moving violently up or down or to the side.

Boxing punches that come in at angles, such as hooks or uppercuts, do just the opposite. They produce rotational forces that can cause the brain itself to twist and distort within the skull, stretching and tearing delicate connections between brain cells.

In 2012, researchers in Ohio and West Virginia looked at the comparative differences in force (and thus the likelihood of injury) between straight-on linear punches and hook punches using a "Hybrid III anthropomorphic test device," a fancy name for a sensor-studded crash test dummy, and a swinging pendulum that could be set to deliver blows with precise amounts of impact energy.

They found that linear punches – straight-on blows to the face – produced less evidence of probable physical damage in a living person, especially when gloves or headgear were used.

On the other hand, hooking blows created rotational acceleration and velocity much more likely to result in significant damage from the subsequent twisting and rending of brain tissues.

Blows to the side of the head tend to be more devastating for other reasons as well. Here's where biology and basic human anatomy come in. Our brains, which are 80 percent water with the consistency of warm butter, are encased within a thick sac or membrane called the dura mater, which helps maintain the organ's shape and contain its liquid contents.

The dura is embedded with a series of arteries, one of which is called the middle meningeal artery. It spreads up and across the sides of the head and face.

What protects this artery and all that lies below is the skull, which is remarkably tough but neither all of one piece nor of uniform thickness. It is thinner, in fact, in the temporal region where the middle meningeal artery exists.

Thus, a powerful hook to the temple transfers more unabated impact energy to the meningeal artery. If the artery ruptures, blood begins filling the space between the dura and the skull, producing an injury called an epidural hematoma. With no place to vent, the accumulating blood presses inward on the brain, squeezing its interior supply of oxygen.

Consciousness may be briefly lost. There can be a sudden weakness due to compression of nerves that send messages to limbs. Epidural hematoma victims often appear to recover. They may be lucid and seemingly unfazed, but if the internal bleeding and pressures continue to mount, they may eventually succumb to catastrophic brain cell death and, possibly, death.

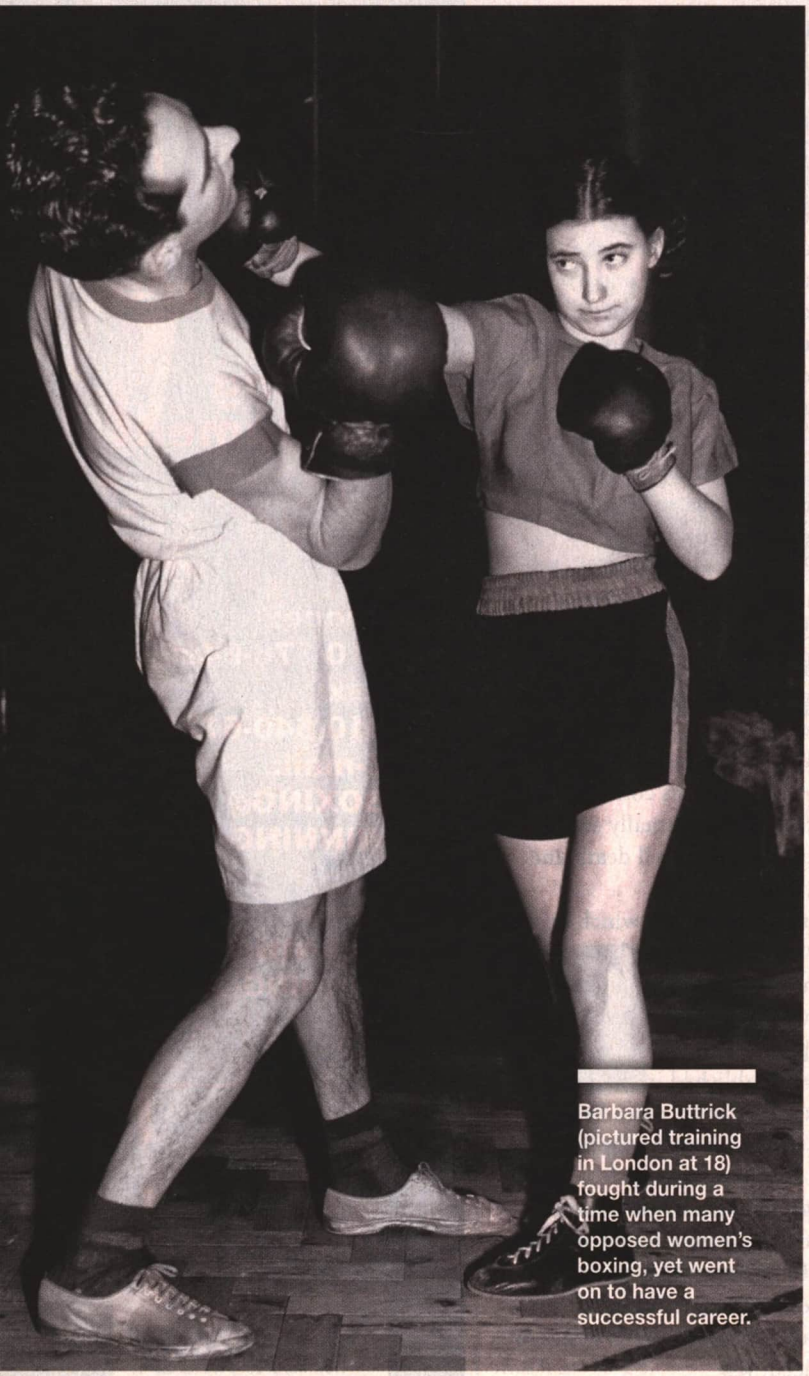
Subdural hematomas, which occur between protective brain layers below the dura, are even more common, more likely to result in catastrophic bleeding and, according to research published in the journal Neurosurgery Focus, more likely to result in death. They are the leading cause of death in boxing.

Boxing is a sport of physics, a display of irresistible forces meeting immovable objects. It is science made violent, compelling and occasionally bittersweet. It is heady stuff indeed.

A PLACE OF HONOR

THE WOMEN GET A HALL OF FAME OF THEIR OWN

By **Thomas Gerbasi**



Barbara Buttrick (pictured training in London at 18) fought during a time when many opposed women's boxing, yet went on to have a successful career.

With the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, remaining a boys' club for the most part, Sue Fox, a former boxer and the unofficial keeper of the flame for women's boxing, has taken matters into her own hands (and her own pockets). She is launching the International Women's Boxing Hall of Fame with seven inductees and an event on July 10 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"I've been thinking about this for years, and if I take a task on, I want to succeed at it," said Fox. "I saw that nobody else was ever going to do it, so I decided that I'm just going to have to take a baby step and challenge myself. But I didn't want to just do it and drop the ball."

She didn't. And knowing Fox, the owner of the Women Boxing Archive Network website, this is no surprise. No one has done more for the sport. And while hers wasn't the final word on the final inductees, she believes that she and the IWBHF's eight-member board got things right.

"I've gotten a tremendous response," said Fox. "People are really behind it."

They should be, because recognition for the ladies of the sweet science is long overdue. Here's the Class of 2014:

BARBARA BUTTRICK

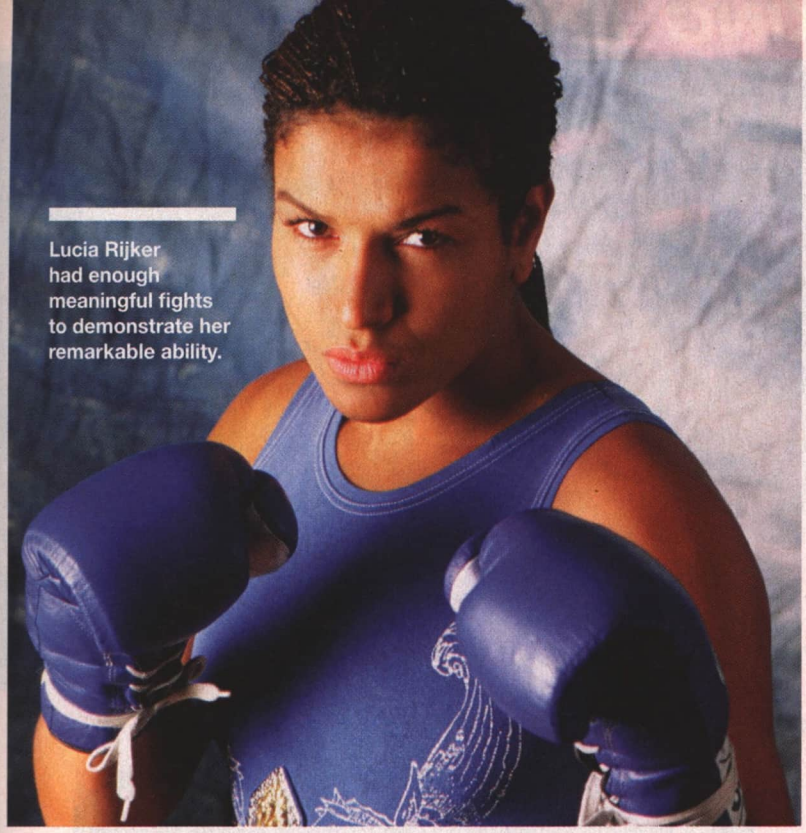
Active: 1948-1960
Record: 30-1-1
Background: If you think female fighters have it rough today, what do you think England's Barbara Buttrick went through when she laced on the gloves in the 1950s? But "The Mighty Atom of the Ring" still did it, paving the way for countless boxers as she compiled a 30-1-1 record. Not bad for a 4-foot-11, 98-pounder who described herself as "small, but mean."

BONNIE CANINO

Active: 1996-2004
Record: 11-4 (5 KOs)
Background: A former kickboxer, Canino didn't get the mainstream attention some other female fighters got during her 1996-99 career (she returned for one comeback fight in 2004). But among hardcore fans and her peers, this southpaw was the real deal in and out of the ring. Since retiring, she has been a tireless ambassador for the sport and its fighters as a coach, educator and promoter.

JO-ANN HAGEN

Active: 1950s
Record: Not available
Background: Like Barbara Buttrick, Hagen didn't compete at a time when women's



Lucia Rijker had enough meaningful fights to demonstrate her remarkable ability.

boxing – or any female sport, for that matter – was embraced by the mainstream sports fan. She went against the grain and did her part to introduce the idea that women could fight. In 1954, she competed in the first televised female fight, defeating Buttrick.

CHRISTY HALBERT

Background: The coach of the 2012 United States Olympic Women's Boxing team oversaw the efforts of gold medal winner Claressa Shields and bronze medalist Marlen Esparza in the London Games. She started as a fighter herself but enters the Hall as one of the most respected teachers of the sport.

REGINA HALMICH

Active: 1994-2007
Record: 54-1-1 (16 KOs)
Background: Halmich had looks and left hooks during her heyday, making her a crossover star in her native Germany. But while the European standout could do glamour shoots with the best of them, it was in the ring that she truly delivered. She lost only once and held titles at 108 and 112 pounds for over 12 years. And that's not a typo.

CHRISTY MARTIN

Active: 1989-2012
Record: 49-7-3 (31 KOs)
Background: The IWBHF waived the five-year retirement rule for Martin, who last fought in 2012. That's how important "The Coal Miner's Daughter" was to women's boxing. Lucia Rijker probably was the greatest female boxer ever, but no one had more of an impact than the gutsy slugger from West Virginia, who made her name on Mike Tyson's undercards and was also the first and only female fighter to make the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

LUCIA RIJKER

Active: 1996-2004
Record: 17-0 (14 KOs)
Background: Most observers believe that Rijker, who held the IBO junior welterweight title, had no peers in the ring. But the years "The Dutch Destroyer" spent in the ring are also remembered for what didn't happen – superfights with Christy Martin and Laila Ali, matchups Rijker wanted but which never materialized. RING

BUTTRICK: KEYSTONE/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; RIJKER: MARCUS BOSCH/ALLSPORT

POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS, Norway
24-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH, Canada
32-9-1 (16 KOS)
Featherweight

3. YESICA YOLANDA BOPP, Argentina
27-1 (12 KOs),
Flyweight

4. JESSICA CHAVEZ, Mexico
20-3-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

5. AVA KNIGHT, U.S.
12-2-3 (5 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. DIANA PRAZAK, Australia
13-2 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS, Argentina
19-1 (9 KOs)
Lightweight

8. MARCELA ELIANA ACUNA, Argentina
41-6-1 (18 KOs)
Junior featherweight

9. DELFINE PERSOON, Belgium
29-1 (13 KOs)
Lightweight

10. MELISSA HERNANDEZ, U.S.
19-5-3 (6 KOs)
Featherweight

Through fights of May 18.

ROCK SOLID

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT **DARMANI ROCK** HAS BECOME AN AMATEUR SENSATION, AND HE'S ONLY GETTING STARTED

By Joseph Santoliquito

Wayne McLeod was driving home one afternoon in 2008 through the Germantown section of Philadelphia when he spotted a crowd gathered on a corner. Curious, he pulled over to find out what the commotion was about.

McLeod found his answer at the core of the pack: His 12-year-old son, Darmani Rock, was engaged in a street fight with another kid.

"I had to stop it," McLeod recalled. "I had to ask the [other] kid how old he was. His family was there watching this, condoning it. The kid told me he was 13. I'm from the streets, so I let it go. I asked Darmani if he wanted to fight."

Darmani nodded that he did. Then he got clocked and began to cry. McLeod stopped it, but with a caveat: Give Darmani some time, and they'll do it again. McLeod took his son to the gym the next day, and soon afterward they found the so-called 13-year old, who was actually 15. The result was different this time, and the kid wanted no part of Darmani Rock again.

Today, few do.

The boy who once cried on the Germantown street is now 18 and a hulking 6-foot-4, 250-pound super heavyweight with fleet feet and quick

Darmani Rock (in red) burst onto the international amateur boxing scene when he beat Peter Kadiru in the final of the World Championships.

hands. And he has made a splash on the amateur scene. In January, he shut out defending champion John Luna 3-0 (in rounds) in the U.S. Youth Championships to qualify for the World Championships in Bulgaria. There, he beat Germany's Peter Kadiru 2-1 on April 24 to win the gold medal, even though he had only two international bouts going into the tournament.

The powers that be in boxing apparently have taken notice. Within days of the victory over Kadiru, McLeod said he received a number of inquiries from promoters interested in signing the junior at Delaware Valley Charter School in Philadelphia.

For now, though, Rock's focus is on making the U.S. team that will compete in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

"That's what I want to do, win an Olympic gold medal in 2016," Rock said. "But things are different now. I'm not used to this attention. A lot of people say I have a lot of Riddick Bowe in me and in the way I fight. But I didn't grow up a boxing fan. I grew up like an average kid, wanting to be in the NBA one day. That's changed. I want to go all the way, but before I turn pro, I want to go to the Olympics.

"Boxing needs an American heavyweight champion. I can see myself filling that role. This past year, I've been thinking about winning a gold medal more and more."

Rock, whose nickname is "Tight" because as a baby he clung tightly to his father's shirt, does have a lot of Bowe in him. He possesses an engaging smile, magnetic personality and a child-like wonderment in his large, round eyes.

He also has some Buster Douglas in him. Douglas was a bundle of unfulfilled potential before upsetting Mike Tyson and didn't do much afterward, in part because of motivational issues. For example, he'd steal away at times to play basketball when he should've been training.

Rock has also had his distractions, although he has begun to take the sport very seriously. You see his immense arms, which are the size of most people's thighs, and it's easy to forget that he's still a teenager.

"I grew to like boxing," Rock said. "When I was younger, I didn't like going to the gym every day. I just liked to run around outside. I didn't do anything, just run around doing normal kid stuff. I'm finding out how good I am now. I never complained about training. I'd show up every day; I'd just be late some days."

"A whole lot of days," McLeod said with a laugh. "'Tight' doesn't know where he is with boxing yet. Everyone else sees it, though. We have people coming up offering money now, three contracts. 'Tight' can get in the ring with a grown man, and that man won't come back to the gym anymore.

"There is still a tug-of-war with getting him to the gym, but it was far greater when he was younger than it is now. ... He got a great education at the Olympic training center. He got used to waking up knowing he had to work out. He's a kid who's starting to come around, especially now, the last two or three months. He's beginning to see where boxing can take him."

Possibly Brazil in 2016 – and beyond. RING

RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

John Molina (right) went down firing against Lucas Matthysse.

JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES

LUCAS MATTHYSSE KO 11 JOHN MOLINA

Date: April 26
Site: StubHub Center, Carson, Calif.
Division: Junior welterweight
Weights: Matthysse 140 pounds; Molina 139.25
Ring rating (going into fight): Matthysse No. 1; Molina not rated
Network: Showtime

★ Lucas Matthysse calls himself "The Machine." But climb aboard only with a reliable seat belt and a handful of motion-sickness pills.

A bout with John Molina was expected to be a tried-and-true step toward restoring some luster lost in the wake of Danny Garcia's victory over Matthysse. What promised to be routine, however, turned into something else altogether. It's an early Fight of the Year contender.

Matthysse (35-3, 32 KOs) put himself in danger early and Molina (27-4, 22 KOs) kept him there for seven rounds before Matthysse emerged from an up-and-down battle with an 11th-round stoppage that put the Argentine back in line for bigger fights, although it's hard to imagine that any could be more dramatic.

""It was really a war, and it got very complicated for me at the beginning," Matthysse told ringside reporters.

Complicated, perhaps, because Matthysse leaves all pretense in the spit bucket.

His record says it all. With 32 knockouts in 35 fights, it's no secret that Matthysse is on a seek-and-destroy mission from the moment he hears the opening bell. It's what makes him exciting. It's also what gets him in trouble, which could come to haunt him again in a 140-pound rematch with Garcia or a bombs-away possibility with Keith Thurman at 147.

Against the tough Molina, it had him on the canvas, once in the second round and again in the fifth, both from right hands.

"I'm disappointed that I didn't finish Lucas," Molina said. "I'm the only one who had him hurt like that, but it's a learning experience for me. I only had 22 amateur fights, and I'm still learning on the job."

Matthysse, bloodied above his right eye from a head butt in the third round, didn't back away or tire as he outworked Molina at a furious pace. And Matthysse's short, accurate punches began to take an inevitable toll. In the eighth, Matthysse was credited with a knockdown that might have been a shove. Whatever it was, there was no doubt about Molina's fatigue. Matthysse capitalized, knocking down Molina in the 10th and finishing him at 22 seconds of the 11th with a four-punch combination.

Predictably, Matthysse called for a rematch with Garcia, who defeated him by a unanimous decision on the undercard of Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s decision over Canelo Alvarez.

"In conversations, my promoter has promised me a title shot," Matthysse said. "I want to win the title at 140 one more time, and then I will move up to 147. But after Molina, they've promised me another shot at 140."

Whomever he fights, be sure to hold on tight. ★

BERMANE STIVERNE TKO 6 CHRIS ARREOLA

Date: May 10
Site: Galen Center, Los Angeles
Division: Heavyweight (for vacant WBC title)
Weights: Stiverne 239.5 pounds; Arreola 239
Ring rating (going into fight): Stiverne No. 3; Arreola No. 6
Network: ESPN

★ The line to the Klitschko Kingdom has been an anonymous one for longer than anybody cares to remember. They might as well be The Pips, the backup singers without Gladys Knight, in that old bit on the forgotten "Richard Pryor Show". Just who are those guys?

A division without any known contenders can't be good for business, not even for the Klitschkos, whose stranglehold on the heavyweight crown was left to Wladimir after brother Vitali left the ring and entered the dangerous world of Ukrainian politics.

Vitali's move from one fight to a bigger one left an opening. Or at least a vacancy.

Bermane Stiverne filled it by stopping Chris Arreola for the WBC title relinquished by Vitali. Stiverne (24-1-1, 21 KOs) made some history in the process: He's the first Haitian to win a major heavyweight title. Had Arreola won, he would have been the first Mexican-American with a piece of the heavyweight championship. But time will determine whether this piece of history is substantive or just another footnote in the game of musical chairs surrounding the Klitschko domain.

Stiverne got Wladimir's attention with the power and speed in a sweeping right hand that knocked down Arreola midway through the fight, which was a rematch of Stiverne's 2013 victory by unanimous decision. He finished Arreola (36-4, 31 KOs) with a combination at 2:02 of the sixth round. Wladimir, who beat an Australian truck driver on April 26 with Vitali in his corner, sent Stiverne a congratulatory tweet. The 140 characters didn't need much interpretation. To wit: In Stiverne, Klitschko sees a way to re-enter the U.S. market for the first time since a 2008 decision over Sultan Ibragimov in New York.

Further signs of an emerging opportunity arrived a few days later with news from ESPN that the bout had the highest rating for the sports network since 2003.

Stiverne's promoter, a re-energized Don King, talked about a world tour. He must have been nostalgic for the bygone days of Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman. Today's heavyweight world starts and ends with Wladimir Klitschko. But against whom? There's the real issue.

Deontay Wilder, the American with 31 knockouts in 31 fights, is the WBC's mandatory challenger. He told RingTV.com that he'd step aside for eight figures.

The power of Bermane Stiverne (right) proved to be the difference in his rematch with Chris Arreola.

"Let's talk about something in the range of $10 million," said Wilder, who was at ringside for Stiverne's victory. "Other than that, there won't be no stepping aside. That would be the end of that."

Anybody for Wilder vs. Stiverne? It'd be a bout with an interesting sidelight. Wilder grew up in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, dreaming about playing college football at the University of Alabama. Current Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban signed Stiverne to play football at Michigan State when Saban coached the Spartans during the mid-1990s. They could call it the Klitschko Bowl. ★

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ UD 12 MIKE ALVARADO

Date: May 17
Site: The Forum, Inglewood, Calif.
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Marquez 141.6 pounds; Alvarado 143.2
Ring rating (going into fight): Marquez No. 5; Alvarado not rated
Network: HBO

★ Juan Manuel Marquez is no politician. But he knows how to campaign, and he does it with the same sort of unerring skill he employs to deliver accurate counter punches that win fights and continue to win over fans.

Marquez did it again against Mike Alvarado in a triumphant return to a re-built Forum and in front of 12,090, who were there to applaud a 21-year career that has summed up the stubborn, no-quit ethic demanded of Mexican fighters.

"A gift to the fans," Marquez said at ringside after a victory that was expected, yet surprising because of its dominance.

At 40, it's hard to foresee when Marquez will quit. Against a bigger Alvarado, 33, he had the timing and energy of the younger man who went 12-0 as a featherweight at The Forum more than 15 years ago. At that time, Marquez was just another one of many good fighters from Mexico. Now, he has a claim on being among the best ever on a list topped by Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. and Ruben Olivares. He's done it with longevity and resilience he could not have envisioned when his career began in the last century.

"Age doesn't matter," said Marquez (56-7-1, 40 knockouts), who won 117-110 on two scorecards and 119-108 on the third after knocking down a badly bruised Alvarado (34-3, 23 KOs) in the eighth round and getting up from a knockdown in the ninth.

It hasn't, at least not for Marquez or an even older Bernard Hopkins. When age doesn't matter, there's always another fight. For Marquez, that can only mean a fifth with Manny Pacquiao, who is a practicing politician. But it was Marquez who, when asked to address the possibility of another fight against the Filipino Congressman, could have been Hillary Clinton talking about running for president in 2016.

He didn't say no. He didn't say yes..

That was his other gift to the fans. They love to talk about possibilities. The speculation creates its own momentum and appetite for what could be a very big payday.

"We'll relax," Marquez said in the immediate aftermath. "I don't know at the moment, but any decision we make will be good for me, good for my family and good for the Mexican fans."

Marquez's comments sound a lot like the dance often done by the party with leverage, which he gained with his sixth-round stoppage of Pacquiao in December 2012 and strengthened at the Forum with a large turnout of Mexican fans.

"It's up to Marquez," said Top Rank's Bob Arum, who has had plans for a November Pacquiao bout in Macau, China's booming re-creation of Las Vegas. "It really is. Manny wants the fight. I think there's a lot of money in the fight. So, we'll see." ★

Juan Manuel Marquez, 40, said after outpointing Mike Alvarado (right): "Age doesn't matter." Alvarado would agree.

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO TKO 5 ALEX LEAPAI

April 26, Oberhausen, Germany (ESPN)

★ Wladimir Klitschko has many titles but only one country. And the country means more than the ponderous collection of belts he retained with a stoppage of Alex Leapai.

"Glory to Ukraine," Klitschko said.

The significance of Klitschko's 16th successive defense of his heavyweight reign was dimmed by the Russian threat to his homeland.

"It wasn't easy, my head was in Ukraine and what is going on there," Klitschko (62-3, 52 KOs) told ringside reporters.

A face of Ukraine's struggle was there at his side. Brother Vitali, a retired heavyweight champion who has been one of the Ukraine's leading opposition figures, worked Wladimir's corner. Vitali's wife, Natalia, sang the Ukrainian national anthem.

Leapai (30-5-3, 24 KOs), a truck driver in Australia, was finished within five rounds. Klitschko dropped him with a combination and finished him with a right at 58 seconds of the fifth.

NO. 7 KEITH THURMAN TKO 3 JULIO DIAZ

April 26, Carson, Calif. (Showtime)

★ There are a lot of reasons to avoid Keith Thurman. Julio Diaz probably wishes that he had. A body shot and big right hand from Thurman (23-0, 21 KOs) forced Diaz to surrender after three rounds, thinking his rib was broken.

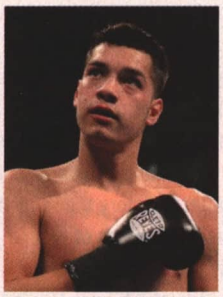
Diaz (40-10-1, 29 KOs) said a quick goodbye to Thurman. But Thurman is just beginning to say hello.

A week later he showed up for Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s victory over Marcos Maidana. It was meet-and-greet time, a sign that Thurman can turn himself into an attraction with social skill as powerful as his punch.

Thurman might not be first in line, but he let everyone know he's available if Amir Khan doesn't land the elusive bout with "Money."

"Everybody is shooting for that Mayweather sweepstakes," Thurman said. "Would I be more ready a year from now? That's an argument. But I feel ready today. So we'll see what happens tomorrow."

No matter what happens, it's safe to say we'll see plenty of Thurman.



NO. 8 OMAR FIGUEROA SD 12 JERRY BELMONTES

April 26, Carson, Calif. (Showtime)

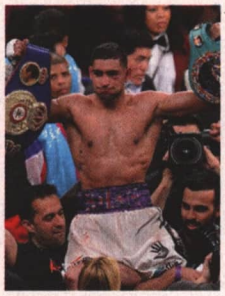
★ Omar Figueroa and Jerry Belmontes produced a yawner. Trouble is, they might have put the judges to sleep along with everybody else in a bout that will be remembered only for controversial scorecards.

Figueroa (23-0-1, 17 KOs) retained his WBC version of the 135-pound title with a split decision over Belmontes (19-4, 5 KOs) in a rematch of amateur rivals. The pre-fight proceedings included trash talk that promised drama, or at least aggressiveness.

But there was neither. Figueroa looked flat. Belmontes stayed away and out of harm's way. For 12 rounds, he was content to box from a distance. From several ringside seats, it still looked as if Belmontes had done enough for a narrow victory.

But Burt Clements and David Mendoza saw it differently. On Clement's card, it was 116-112. On Mendoza's, it was 118-110. Both for Figueroa. Hubert Minn scored it 115-113 for Belmontes.

A rematch? How about a nap instead?



AMIR KHAN UD 12 LUIS COLLAZO

May 3, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Amir Khan halted slippage in his popularity and credibility by adding pounds to his body and hope to his career.

Khan's welterweight debut, his first fight in 13 months, produced a poised, tactical decision over Luis Collazo by scores of 119-104, 117-106 and 119-104. Khan saw the win as a steppingstone to the payday that eluded him earlier this year.

"Absolutely," Khan said when asked if he wanted to be next in the Mayweather sweepstakes. "Absolutely."

But a couple of things stand in the way of that possibility. Khan, a practicing Muslim, can't fight in September because of Ramadan. Then there was talk of an immediate rematch of Mayweather's difficult decision over Marcos Maidana.

Khan (29-3, 19 KOs), a former junior welterweight, stayed in the discussion with superior speed that kept his notoriously fragile chin out of harm's way. He also resisted the temptation to brawl with Collazo (35-6, 18 KOs), whom he knocked down with a crisp right in the fourth round.

ADRIEN BRONER UD 10 CARLOS MOLINA

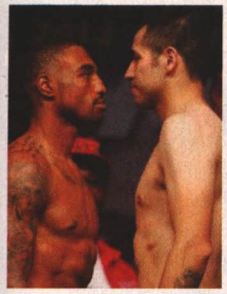
May 3, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Adrien Broner's collection of nicknames includes: The Can Man.

"I'm still Adrien 'The Problem' Broner, the Can Man," he told Showtime's Jim Gray after scoring a 10-round junior welterweight decision over Carlos Molina. "Anybody can get it. Afri-Cans ... I just beat the f--- out of a Mexi-Can."

Two days before Cinco de Mayo, the slur angered Mexicans and Mexican-Americans so much that they wanted to kick Broner's can. The WBC even suspended him, although it's hard to suspend stupidity. Broner has since tried to backtrack. He posted a video saying he "didn't disrespect" Mexicans and "didn't offend" anybody.

Amid the talk, there's growing impatience with Broner (28-1, 22 KOs). Can he fight? In his first bout since he was humiliated by Marcos Maidana at welterweight, he mocked Molina (17-2-1, 7 KOs) more often than he hit him in scoring a 140-pound decision as dull as it was unanimous.



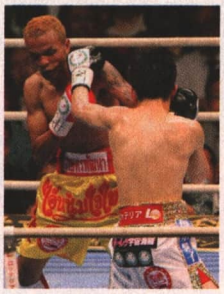
J'LEON LOVE UD 10 **NO. 9 MARCO ANTONIO PERIBAN**
May 3, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Survival and J'Leon Love are inseparable. He learned how to survive out of the ring. Now he survives in it.

Love (18-0, 10 KOs) put his knowledge to good use against Marco Antonio Periban in the first fight of the pay-per-view portion of the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Marcos Maidana card. Love, a Mayweather-promoted super middleweight, survived the fifth round.

A straight right from Periban (20-2-1, 13 KOs) turned Love's head violently from one side to the other. A quick succession of blows followed, putting Love on the canvas. Periban, of Mexico City, then fell back and onto the seat of his trunks, apparently from over-exerting himself in a furious attempt to end the wild round.

But Love wouldn't go away. He regained his balance, then his equilibrium and finally the momentum with precise punches thrown from many angles and in enough abundance to win a 10-round unanimous decision.



AMNAT RUENROENG SD 12 **KAZUTO IOKA**
May 7, Osaka, Japan (TBS-Japan)

★ Amnat Ruenroeng is 34 years old in a division, flyweight, where 30 is retirement age. But Ruenroeng was anything but over the hill in retaining his IBF title with a split decision over Kazuto Ioka, who came in as the No. 2-ranked junior flyweight.

Location, location, location made it an upset. The 25-year-old Ioka was at home in Osaka, where he was an emerging star. But history provided a precedent that indicated Ruenroeng's style could prevail.

Ruenroeng (13-0, 5 KOs) beat Ioka (14-1, 9 KOs) in a 2007 amateur bout. He was stronger then and stronger seven years later, especially with a body attack that scored on two cards in the second half of the bout. Pawel Kardyni had it 115-112 for Ruenroeng. Hilton Whitaker was even more impressed with a 119-108 card that favored the Thai fighter. Eddie Hernandez scored it 114-113 for Ioka.

Anybody for a rematch? The scoring disparity dictates one, although Ruenroeng is reported to be in line for a shot at China's Olympic gold medalist, Zou Shiming.

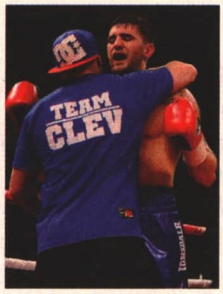
NO. 1 DONNIE NIETES TKO 9 **NO. 3 MOISES FUENTES**
May 10, Pasay City, Philippines (ABS-CBN Sports)

★ Donnie Nietes' career began with a broom. He paid for his membership at the ALA Gym in the Philippines by sweeping the floors.

Twelve years later, he got a return on his investment with a victory that swept up another belt in the junior flyweight division. Nietes, 31, stopped Moises Fuentes to capture THE RING's vacant junior flyweight championship and retained his WBO title in a rematch of their draw in 2013.

"This is the most satisfying fight, because last time I was a little bit disappointed, because the people weren't really satisfied," Nietes (33-1-4, 19 KOs) told RingTV.com after knocking down Fuentes (19-2, 10 KOs) twice with two rights for a TKO at 2:56 of the ninth.

Now, Nietes, a 108-pound technician, has put himself in line for a shot at one of the flyweight lords – Akira Yaegashi, Roman Gonzalez and Juan Francisco Estrada.



NATHAN CLEVERLY TKO 2 **SHAWN CORBIN**
May 17, Cardiff, Wales (Sky Sports)

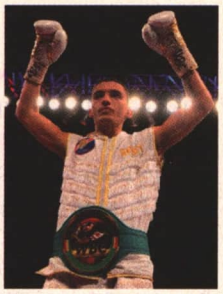
★ Nathan Cleverly returned to a place that has haunted him for nine months. He had to. Only at the Motorpoint Arena in Cardiff could he exorcise the memory of suffering a fourth-round knockout at the anvil-like hands of Sergey Kovalev.

Mission accomplished.

Cleverly (27-1, 13 KOs), a former light heavyweight champion, returned to the scene 25 pounds heavier and seemingly renewed in a ghost-busting victory over Shawn Corbin (17-5, 12 KOs) of Guyana.

"It's been nine months out of the ring, but I've developed into a cruiserweight," Cleverly told ringside reporters after landing a big uppercut that led to a stoppage at 2:19 of the second round. "I'm mentally refreshed. I wanted to come back to the same venue and remove the memory of losing the world title."

Cleverly's task now is to regain a major title at the heavier weight. A step in that direction might be a July date with U.K. rival Tony Bellew, possibly in Liverpool.



NO. 9 LEE SELBY UD 12 **ROMULO KOASICHA**
May 17, Cardiff, Wales (Sky Sports)

★ Lee Selby is walking into featherweight contention with quick feet that have friends and countrymen calling him "the Welsh Mayweather."

Selby's quick ascendancy continued with a one-sided decision over Mexican Romulo Koasicha.

Koasicha (21-4, 12 KOs) tested Selby early, cutting him above the right eye, and then staggered him with a left in the eighth. But Selby (19-1, 7 KOs) swiftly pedaled away from each crisis with instinctive poise and then countered with the precise punches that earned him scores of 119-109 on two cards and 119-110 on the third.

With only 20 fights on his resume, Selby is probably a bout or two away from shot at a major title. Still, he wants a fight with the experienced Nonito Donaire.

"He's a superstar over in America, and I'd love to be in a fight with him," Selby told U.K. reporters before beating Koasicha. "I think I can beat anybody."

Note: The ratings cited in these reports were those going into the fights.

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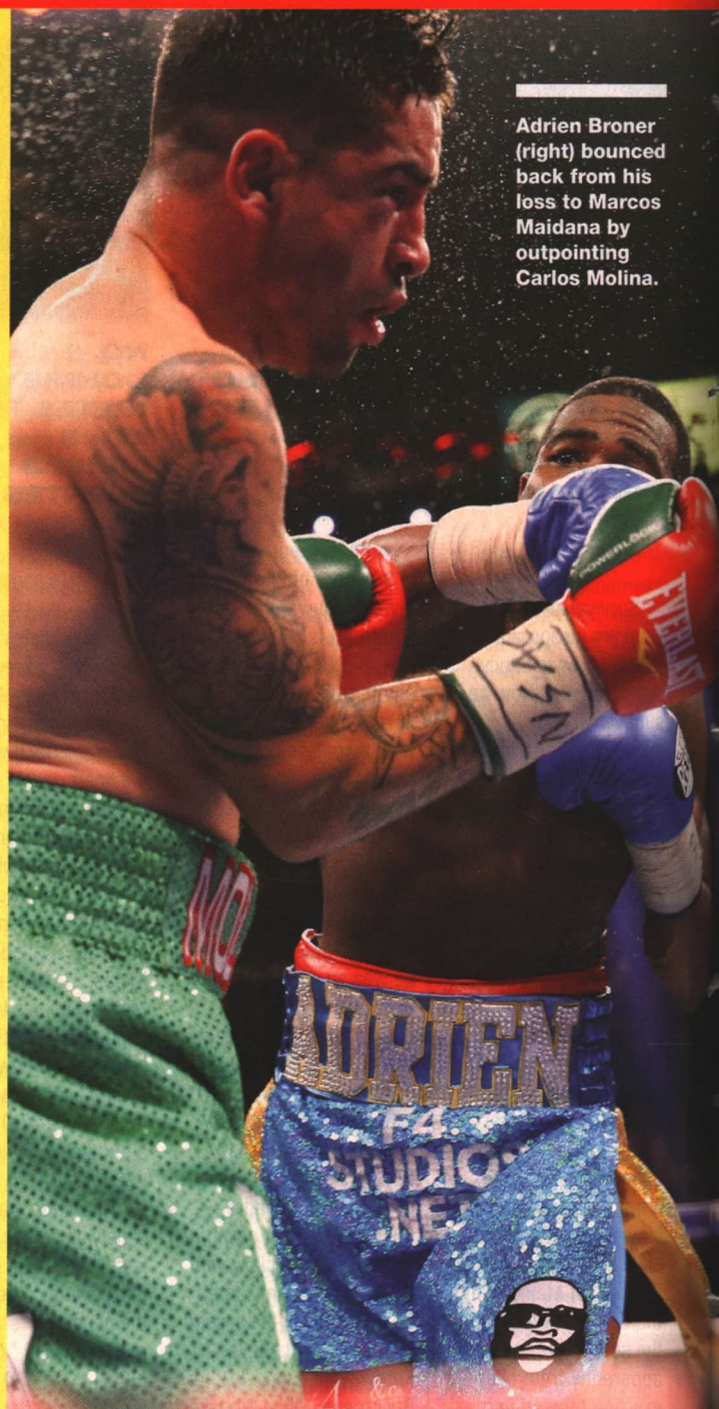
FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH FIGHTS OF MAY 18 (CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)



Adrien Broner (right) bounced back from his loss to Marcos Maidana by outpointing Carlos Molina.

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Wladimir Klitschko TKO 5 Alex Leapai
Joseph Parker TKO 7 Marcelo Luiz Nascimento
Marcin Rekowski UD 10 Oliver McCall
Lucas Browne KO 5 Eric Martel Bahoeli
Alexander Petkovic TKO 4 Marino Goles
Eric Molina TKO 5 DaVarryl Williamson
Bermane Stiverne TKO 6 Chris Arreola
Derric Rossy MD 10 Joe Hanks
Eddie Chambers TKO 3 Carl Baker
Andy Ruiz Jr. TKO 2 Manuel Quezada
Shannon Briggs TKO 1 Matthew Greer

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Bilal Laggoune TKO 9 Christophe Dufaux
Nuri Seferi UD 12 Tamas Lodi
Vikapita Meroro TKO 11 Alphonce Mchumiatumbo
Nathan Cleverly TKO 2 Shawn Corbin

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Thomas Williams Jr. KO 3 Enrique Ornelas
Tony Averlant UD 12 Serdar Sahin
Bob Ajisafe TKO 5 Leon Senior
Travis Dickinson TKO 6 Matty Clarkson

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Martin Murray TKO 6 Ishmael Tetteh
Ezequiel Maderna TKO 3 Richard Vidal
Jonathan Gonzalez SD 10 Rogelio Medina
Arthur Abraham UD 12 Nikola Sjekloca
J'Leon Love UD 10 Marco Antonio Periban
Roamer Angulo TKO 2 Slavisa Simeunovic
Norbert Nemesapati TKO 6 Ivan Stupalo
Zac Dunn KO 2 Kyung-Suk Kwak
Bernard Donfack KO 10 Javier Alberto Mamani
Callum Smith TKO 2 Tobias Webb

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Andrey Meryasev UD 10 Carlos Baldomir
Arif Magomedov TKO 3 Alex Theran
Adam Etches TKO 6 Felipe De la Paz Teniente
Jermall Charlo TKO 3 Hector Munoz
Karim Achour UD 10 Davy Armand
Artur Akavov TKO 2 Ivan Jukic

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Ishe Smith KO 2 Ryan Davis
Sebastien Madani D 12 Anderson Clayton
Omar Chavez UD 10 Daniel Sandoval
Nick Klappert KO 3 Gogi Knezevic
(F) Maria Lindberg TKO 3 Edita Lesnik
Delvin Rodriguez D 10 Joachim Alcine
Patryk Szymanski KO 6 Andrei Abramenka
Isaac Real KO 8 Emanuele Della Rosa

WELTERWEIGHTS

Josesito Lopez TKO 5 Aaron Martinez
Robson Assis UD 12 Hector Carlos Santana
Keith Thurman TKO 3 Julio Diaz
Frankie Gomez KO 2 Orlando Vazquez
Roberto Garcia TKO 6 Victor Manuel Cayo
Floyd Mayweather Jr. MD 12 Marcos Maidana
Amir Khan UD 12 Luis Collazo
Ceferino Rodriguez TKO 6 Ismael El Massoudi
Ray Robinson TKO 4 George Sosa
Azad Azizov SD 12 Lukasz Janik
Janer Gonzalez KO 6 Carlos Galvan

ED MULHOLLAND/GOLDEN BOY/GOLDEN BOY VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Bethuel Ushona TKO 10 Ebenezer Lamptey
Anton Novikov UD 10 Javier Castro
(F) Tori Nelson TKO 2 Mia St. John
Juan Manuel Marquez UD 12 Mike Alvarado

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Paul Kamanga TKO 7 Adam de Moor
Takahiro Ao UD 10 Marco Lopez
Lucas Matthysse KO 11 John Molina
Sharif Bogere TKO 6 Arturo Urena
Michael Perez UD 10 Jorge Romero
Cesar Cuenca UD 12 Albert Mensah
Timo Schwarzkopf TKO 1 Anzor Gamgebeli
Antonio Lozada Jr. TKO 5 Cristian Solano
Adrien Broner UD 10 Carlos Molina
Mauro Godoy TKO 5 Federico Malaspina
(F) Rola El Halabi UD 10 Victoria Cisneros
Johan Perez TKO 10 Fernando Monte de Oca
Antonio Orozco UD 10 Martin Honorio
Gavin Rees SD 12 Gary Buckland
Viktor Postol KO 11 Selcuk Aydin

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Gyorgy Mizsei SD 12 Brunet Zamora
(F) Nicole Boss TKO 3 Sopio Putkaradze
Omar Figueroa SD 12 Jerry Belmontes
Yoshitaka Kato TKO 7 Yuhei Suzuki
Mickey Bey UD 10 Alan Herrera
Masayoshi Nakatani UD 12 Ricky Sismundo
Derry Mathews SD 12 Martin Gethin
Jose Roman UD 10 Luis Solis
Joel Diaz Jr. UD 10 Tyler Asselstine
Javier Prieto D 12 Ivan Cano
Diego Magdaleno UD 8 Oscar Bravo

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Andrey Klimov UD 12 Francisco Contreras
Mzonke Fana TKO 2 Themba Tshicila
Harmonito Dela Torre TKO 3 Gadwin Tubigon
(F) Hyun-Mi Choi TKO 8 Keanpetch Superchamps
Andres Gutierrez MD 10 Jairo Hernandez
Rey Bautista UD 10 Sergio Villanueva
(F) Ogleidis Suarez UD 10 Calixta Silgado
Jaider Parra TKO 3 Rafael Hernandez
Samir Kasmi MD 12 Sebastien Cornu

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Jayson Velez TKO 2 Miguel Soto
Jesus Cuellar UD 12 Rico Ramos
William Gonzalez KO 7 Cornelius Lock
Matias Rueda TKO 3 Claudio Rosendo Tapia
(F) Carla Torres SD 10 Ronica Jeffrey
Kamil Laszczyk UD 12 Tuomo Eronen
Miguel Marriaga KO 8 Marcos Cardenas
Lee Selby UD 12 Romulo Koasicha
Raul Hirales KO 3 Ernesto Guerrero

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Kiko Martinez TKO 7 Hozumi Hasegawa
Siviwe Hasheni UD 12 Luthando Mbumbulwana
Nop Kratingdaenggym UD 12 Renren Pasignahin
Tomas Rojas TKO 8 Jose Cabrera
Kid Galahad TKO 4 Fred Mundraby
Manuel Avila KO 2 David De La Mora
Qiu Xiao Jun KO 4 Rasmanudin
Paulus Ambunda UD 12 Cristian Palma

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Shinsuke Yamanaka TKO 9 Stephane Jamoye
Nikolay Potapov UD 10 Martin Casillas
Julio Ceja TKO 10 Ranel Suco
Hernan Marquez UD 10 John Mark Apolinario
Zhanat Zhakiyanov KO 5 Karim Guerfi
Rau'shee Warren UD 10 Ricardo Alvarado
(F) Mayra Gomez SD 10 Carolina Gaite
(F) Carolina Rodriguez MD 10 Janeth Perez
Alie Laurel KO 1 Mike Espanosa
Jason Cunningham TKO 5 Isaac Owusu
Suriyan Sor Rungvisai TKO 7 Fernando Ocon

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Jerwin Ancajas KO 1 Petchwanchai Sor Visetkit
Rey Megrino KO 3 Ernesto Saulong
Omar Narvaez KO 4 Antonio Garcia

FLYWEIGHTS

Juan Francisco Estrada TKO 10 Richie Mepranum
(F) Yesica Yolanda Bopp UD 10 Daniela Bermudez
Valery Yanchy UD 12 Andrea Sarritzu
(F) Jessica Chavez UD 10 Tenkai Tsunami
Amnat Ruenroeng SD 12 Kazuto Ioka
Milan Melindo MD 12 Martin Tecuapetla
(F) Raja Amasheh UD 10 Susana Cruz Perez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

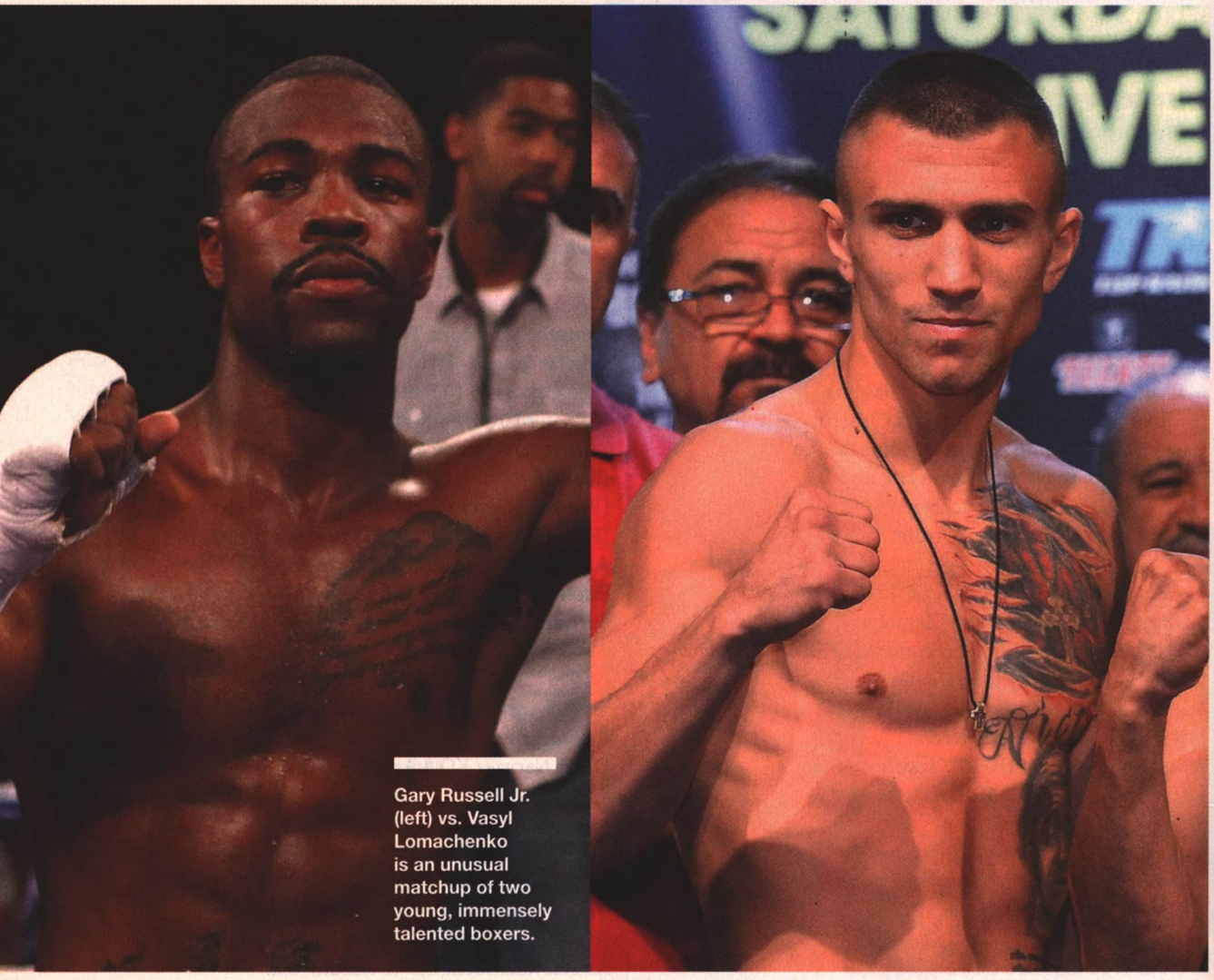
Johnriel Casimero KO 1 Mauricio Fuentes
Paipharob Kokietgym TKO 4 Jay-ar Estremos
Donnie Nietes KO 9 Moises Fuentes
Benezer Alolod TKO 3 Jerson Mancio
(F) Sindy Amador SD 10 Maria Suarez

STRAWWEIGHTS

Wanheng Menayothin TKO 4 Domi Nenokeba
Simphiwe Khonco SD 12 Sibusiso Twani
Carlos Velarde SD 10 Jose Argumedo
Katsunari Takayama UD 12 Shin Ono
(F) Victoria Argueta UD 10 Nancy Franco
Alexis Diaz TKO 5 Jorle Estrada
Xiong Zhao Zhong TKO 5 Roilo Golez
(F) Yuko Kuroki UD 10 Mari Ando

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

JUNE



Gary Russell Jr. (left) vs. Vasyl Lomachenko is an unusual matchup of two young, immensely talented boxers.

VASYL LOMACHENKO VS. GARY RUSSELL JR.

June 21, Los Angeles

Division: Featherweights (for the vacant WBO title)

TV: Showtime

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Robert Guerrero vs. Yoshihiro Kamegai, welterweights; Devon Alexander vs. Jesus Soto Karass, welterweights

Significance: Two such gifted young fighters rarely, if ever take the risk of fighting one another so early in their careers these days. Lomachenko (1-1, according to boxrec.com) was impressive in his loss to Orlando Salido. We've been waiting for Russell (24-0, 14 KOs) to step up.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Russell UD; Fischer – Lomachenko UD; Satterfield – Russell SD

TERENCE CRAWFORD VS. YURIORKIS GAMBOA

June 28, CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Neb.

Division: Lightweights (for Crawford's WBO title)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★

Also fighting: Matt Korobov vs. Jose Uzcategui, middleweights

Significance: Crawford (23-0, 16 KOs) capped a nice run by outpointing Ricky Burns to win the title. The Nebraskan is a very good all-around boxer. Gamboa (23-0, 16 KOs) was supposed to be the next great thing but his inactivity (two fights in three years) makes him a question mark.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Gamboa UD; Fischer – Crawford KO 10; Satterfield – Crawford UD

JUNE 21 – Anatoliy Dudchenko vs. Nadjib Mohammedi, light heavyweights, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. (NBC Sports Net)

JUNE 21 – Martin Murray vs. Max Bursak, middleweights, Monte Carlo

JUNE 21 – Hekkie Budler vs. Pigmy Kokietgym, strawweights (for Budler's WBO title), Monte Carlo

JUNE 21 – Mateusz Masternak vs. Youri Kalenga, cruiserweights, Monte Carlo

JUNE 27 – Ricky Burns vs. Dejan Zlaticanin, lightweights, Glasgow, Scotland

JULY

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. ERISLANDY LARA

July 12, MGM Grand, Las Vegas
Division: Junior middleweights
TV: Showtime Pay Per View
Watchability rating: (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Tomoki Kameda vs. Pungluang Sor Singyu, bantamweights (for Kameda's WBO title); Juan Manuel Lopez vs. Francisco Vargas, junior lightweights
Significance: No one can say Alvarez (43-1-1, 31 KOs) is facing a pushover. The Mexican bounced back from his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. by stopping the tough Alfredo Angulo but faces a stiff test against Lara (19-1-2, 12 KOs), who has the ability and experience to give anyone trouble.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Alvarez UD; Fischer – Alvarez UD; Satterfield – Alvarez SD

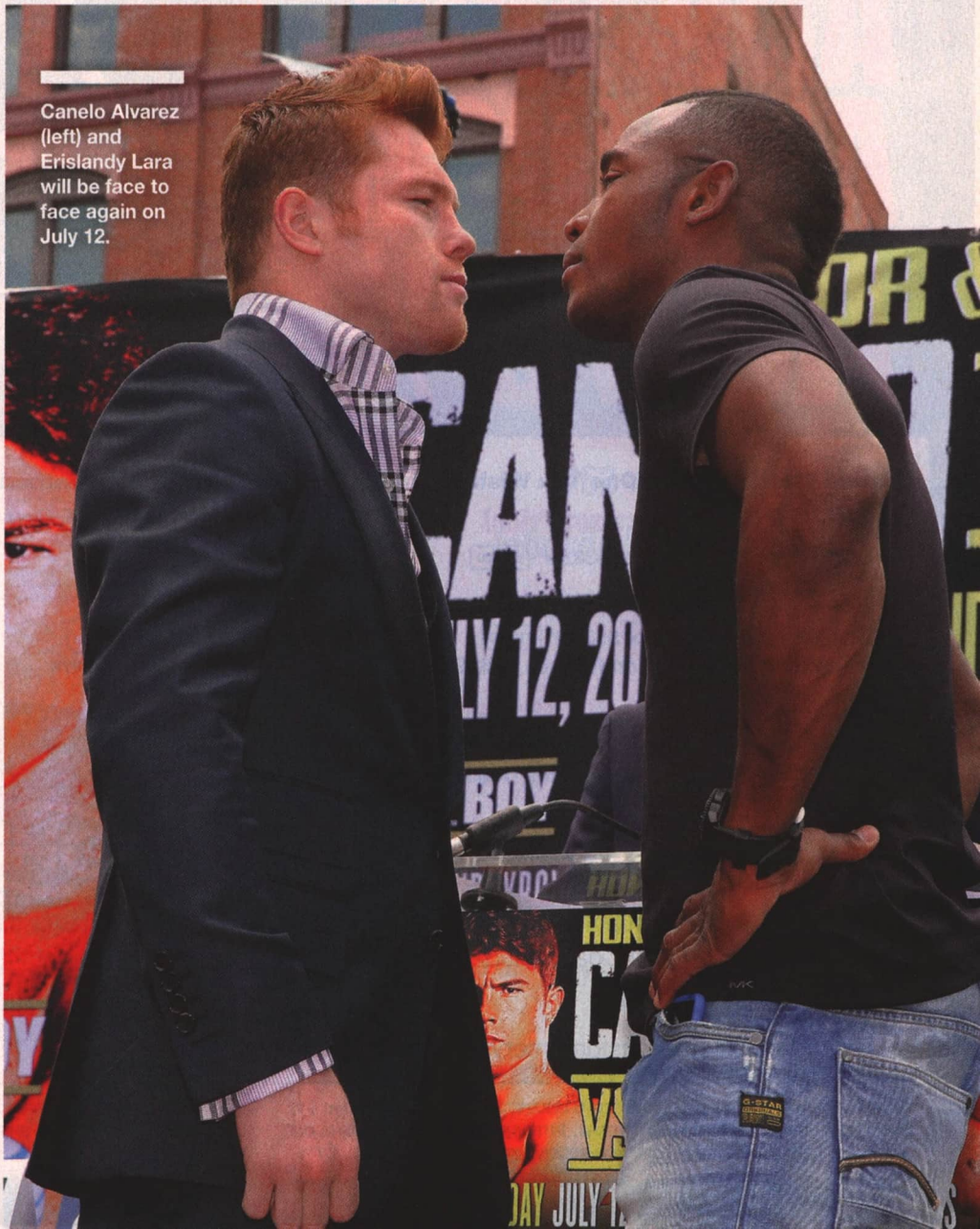
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX VS. JONATHAN GUZMAN

July 19, Venetian Resort, Macau
Division: Junior featherweights (for Rigondeaux's WBO title)
TV: BoxNation in the U.K.
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Brian Vilora vs. TBA, flyweights; Zou Shiming vs. TBA, flyweights
Significance: The boxing wizard Rigondeaux (13-0, 8 KOs) has been as dominant as any fighter of late. That probably won't change against Guzman (16-0, 16 KOs). The Dominican has a gaudy KO record but has faced no recognizable opponents and has fought once outside his country.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Rigondeaux KO 9; Fischer – Rigondeaux UD; Satterfield – Rigondeaux KO 1

TYSON FURY VS. DERECK CHISORA II

July 26, Phones 4U Arena, Manchester, England
Division: Heavyweights
TV: BoxNation in the U.K.
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Billy Joe Saunders vs. Emanuele Blandamura, middleweights; Liam Smith vs. Navid Mansoori, junior middleweights; Derry Mathews vs. Terry Flanagan, lightweights
Significance: Fury (22-0, 16 KOs) and Chisora (20-4, 13 KOs) aren't particularly gifted heavyweights, but their brash, sometimes crude behavior commands attention and has made this an important fight in the U.K. Fury outpointed an overweight Chisora in their first fight.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Chisora KO 8; Fischer – Fury MD; Satterfield – Chisora KO 9

JULY 4 – Michael Katsidis vs. Graham Earl, lightweights, Toowoomba, Australia
JULY 10 – Argenis Mendez vs. Rances Barthelemy II, junior lightweights (for Mendez's IBF title), Miami
JULY 26 – Gennady Golovkin vs. Daniel Geale, middleweights (for Golovkin's WBA title), New York



Canelo Alvarez (left) and Erislandy Lara will be face to face again on July 12.

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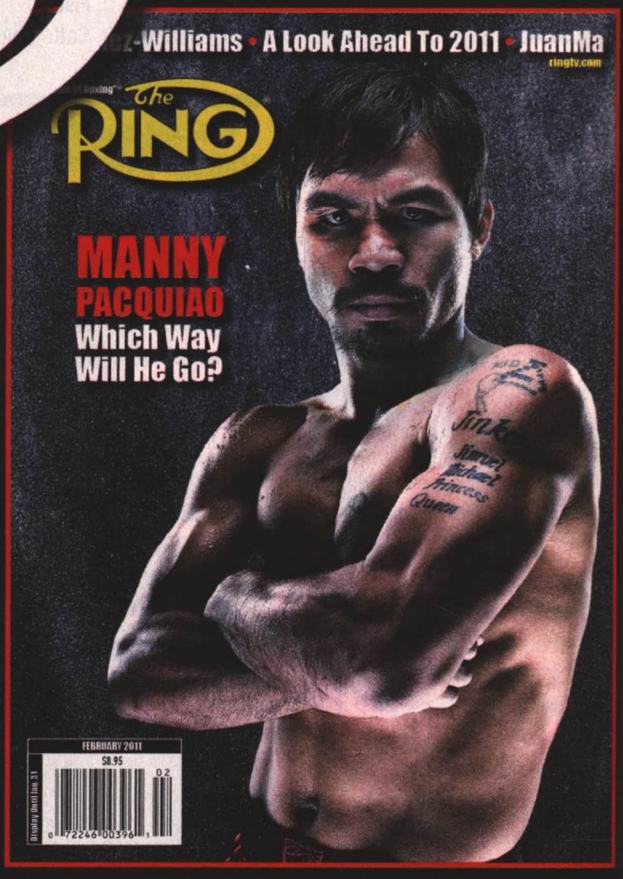

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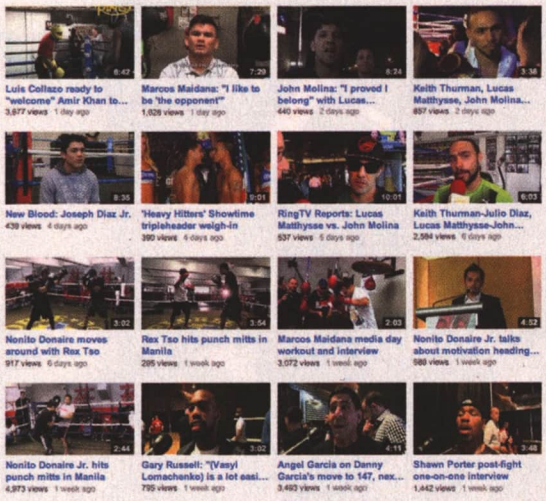

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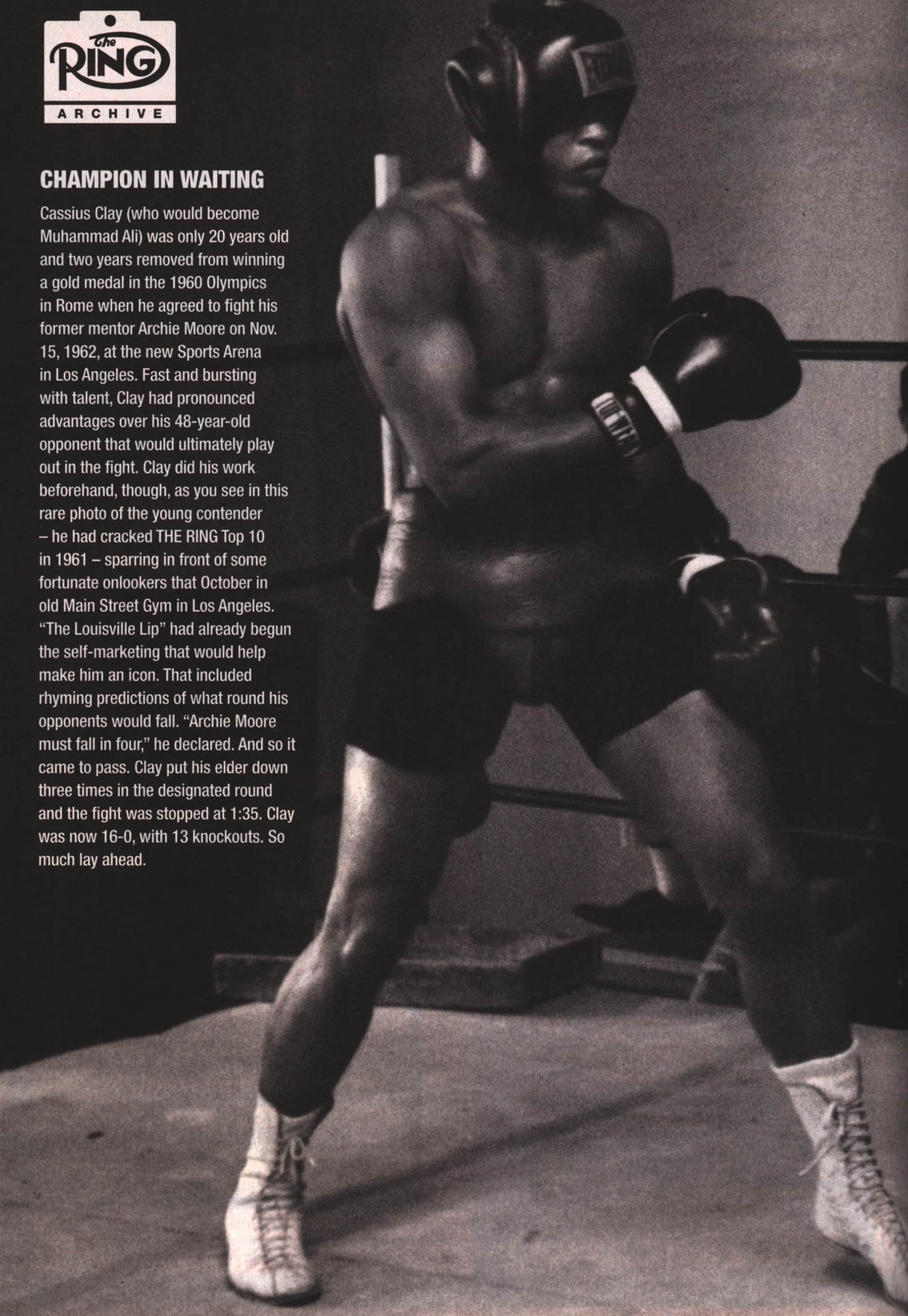

CHAMPION IN WAITING

Cassius Clay (who would become Muhammad Ali) was only 20 years old and two years removed from winning a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics in Rome when he agreed to fight his former mentor Archie Moore on Nov. 15, 1962, at the new Sports Arena in Los Angeles. Fast and bursting with talent, Clay had pronounced advantages over his 48-year-old opponent that would ultimately play out in the fight. Clay did his work beforehand, though, as you see in this rare photo of the young contender – he had cracked THE RING Top 10 in 1961 – sparring in front of some fortunate onlookers that October in old Main Street Gym in Los Angeles. "The Louisville Lip" had already begun the self-marketing that would help make him an icon. That included rhyming predictions of what round his opponents would fall. "Archie Moore must fall in four," he declared. And so it came to pass. Clay put his elder down three times in the designated round and the fight was stopped at 1:35. Clay was now 16-0, with 13 knockouts. So much lay ahead.

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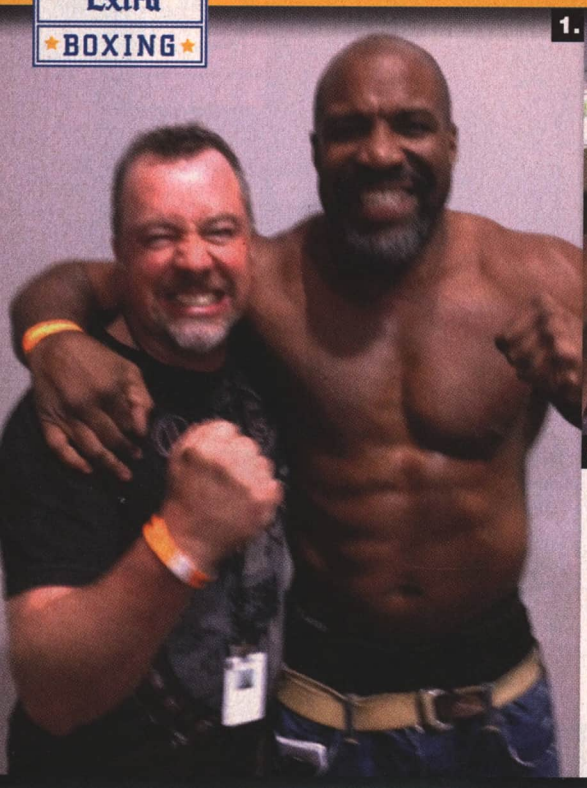
AT THE FIGHTS



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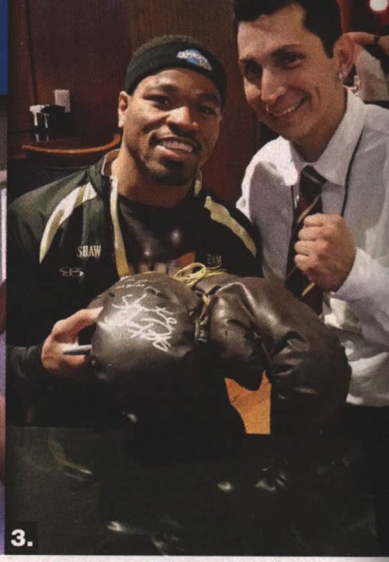

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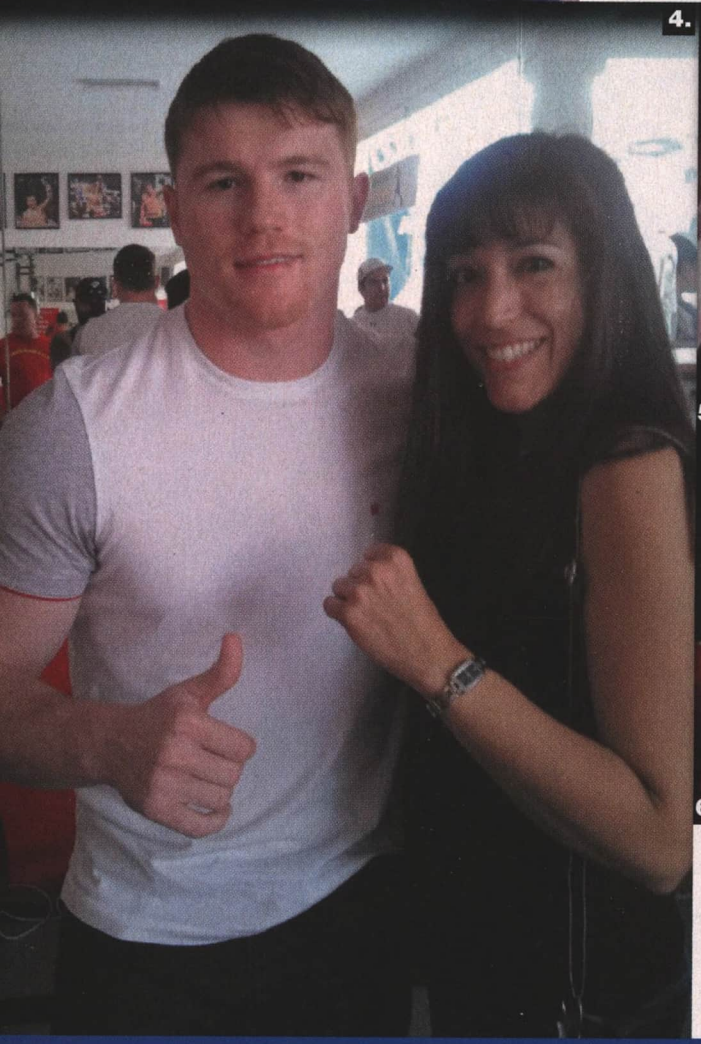
1. Duane Chapman (left) with heavyweight Shannon Briggs at the weigh-in for Briggs' first-round knockout of Francisco Mireles in April in Carlton, Minn. **2.** Eric Alicea (right) with Hall of Famer Roberto Duran. **3.** J.C. Papaleo (right) with IBF welterweight titleholder Shawn Porter shortly before Porter's knockout of Paulie Malignaggi in April in Washington, D.C. **4.** Rosie Ramirez with Canelo Alvarez in March at his gym in Guadalajara, Mexico. **5.** Jayson Mariano (right) with WBO junior welterweight beltholder Ruslan Provodnikov at the Gilberto Sanchez-Giovanni Lorenzo card in April in Las Vegas. **6.** Michael Montero is flanked by Hall of Famers Sugar Ray Leonard (left) and Thomas Hearns at a boxing event in April in Santa Monica, Calif.



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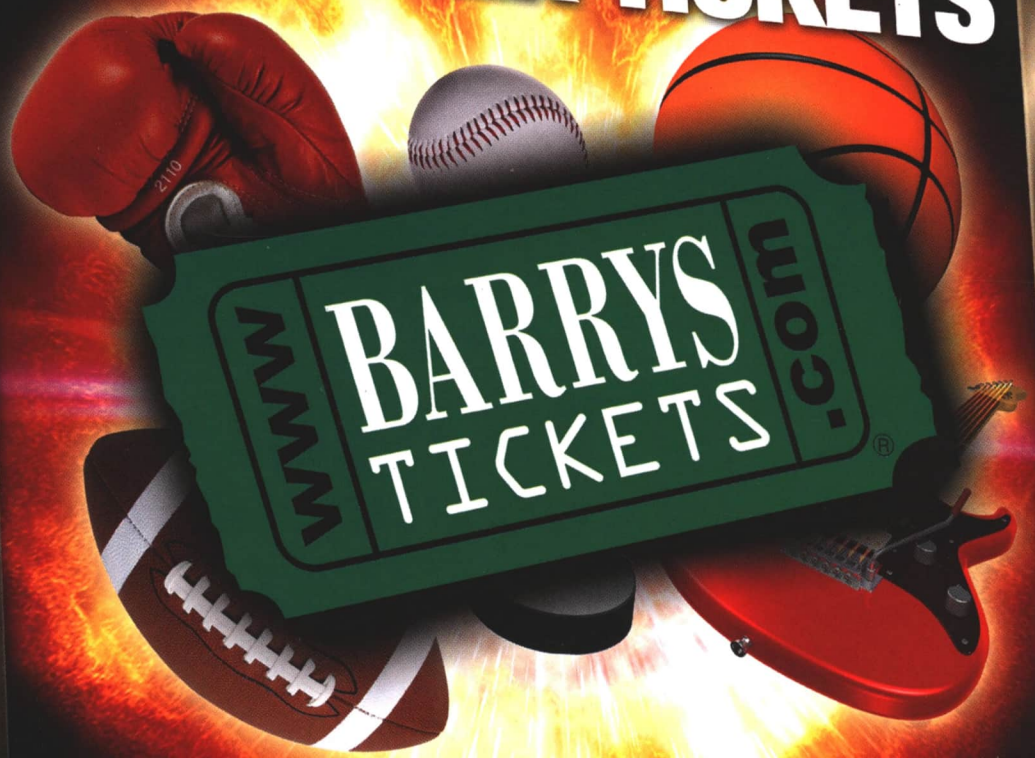

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